



Clifford Wetherbee

June 15, 1928 - April 5, 2008

Clifford Eugene Wetherbee passed away Saturday in Corvallis. Cliff to his co-workers and Gene to his family and friends, was born in Upland, California on June 15, 1928. He attended public schools in Upland, graduating from Chaffey High School in 1946.

On May 14, 1955, Gene and Mary Stufflebeam were married in Los Angeles. He attended UC Berkeley and studied engineering. He worked as an aerospace engineer for more than 30 years on a number of projects including the X-15, Gemini, Apollo, Shuttle and the B2.

Gene enjoyed life in all its richness. Insatiably curious, he would study diverse and complex topics for the fun of it. As a result, he was a font of interesting facts, which he shared with the same enthusiasm he embraced the study. In recent years, we learned of quantum physics, brain mapping and various marvels of modern engineering from him.

Gene enjoyed being outdoors. Hiking in the mountains, camping in the desert, body surfing at the beach--Gene loved to play in the sun and fresh air. He especially enjoyed these activities when sharing them with his family--first with his wife and children and later with his grandchildren. No one could build a sand castle or pitch a tent or throw a frisbee like Gene. And games! Gene loved games. He played chess like a master and just about any card game. As an engineer, he was a whiz at Pictionary--and we always fought to have him on our Trivial Pursuit or charades team.

In addition to playing with family, he fed us. A variety of snacks would

mysteriously appear at elbows or on the coffee table during brief gaming breaks or when the rest of us were sitting down to recover from the last round of “anarchy” ball. Oranges, finger sandwiches made of peanut butter and jelly, popcorn, various cookies, bagels and cream cheese, bananas - any number of finger foods were always available, but his specialty were “Gene’s Beans” and chips. On family vacations, and there were many, it became a tradition for Grandpa Gene to get up and make french toast for breakfast. Grandpa to some grandchildren, Papa to the others - Daddy to his daughters and Gene to his wife he will always be remembered for his infectious smile and his infinite patience. We will miss him.

Gene is survived by his wife of 53 years, Mary Wetherbee of Corvallis OR; two daughters - Leanne Pike of Corvallis OR and Joy Strawbridge of Camarillo CA; six grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. He is also survived by three sisters - Pat Crocker, Connie Williams, and Verna Suarez, all in California.

Predeceased by his parents, Clifford and Edna Wetherbee; and, his brother Donald.