



Wayne Carlton "Bull" Durham

November 7, 1941 - October 24, 2024

Wayne Carlton "Bull" Durham passed away quietly at his home in Blacksburg, Virginia, just shy of his 83rd birthday, after battling metastatic cancer. Married for over 53 years, he is survived by his wife Katherine Werner and his sons Mark (Molly) of Buffalo, NY, Joshua (Monica) of Longmont, CO, his daughter Rebecca Todd (Daniel) of Blacksburg, VA and many grandchildren. He was predeceased by his daughter, Judith, and his son, Sean.

Bull was born on November 7, 1941 in Jacksonville, Florida to Roy and Bertie Durham where he grew up with his older brother Leon. He went on to lead a full life with an esteemed career in the U.S. Navy, followed by his tenure as a VT professor in the department of Aerospace Engineering.

Bull's lifetime achievements were too numerous to note here. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1965, received his Masters at the Naval Post-Graduate School in 1984 and his Doctorate from Virginia Tech in 1989. He served in Vietnam from 1967 - 1970 as a fighter pilot aboard the USS Oriskany and became a Naval Test Pilot. His days flying F-8s, numerous aircraft as a test pilot at Pax River, and F-4s off the USS Forrestal were

undoubtedly some of his best memories. Bull was a true patriot, “holding colors” at his flagpole every morning and evening.

While at VT, he became a pioneer in the study of flight dynamics and was a world renowned expert in flight control. After retiring from Tech in 2004, he proudly collaborated with his former graduate students to publish two textbooks on the subject. He was instrumental in the development of the Flight Simulation Lab in Randolph Hall in the 1990s. He enjoyed great camaraderie with many of his graduate students over the years, which included holding a few “lectures” at Bogen’s Friday Happy Hours. After retirement, he always looked forward to the graduate students that took time to visit.

Bull remained extremely active until his final days. An avid cyclist, Bull spent many happy hours with extended bike rides through the NRV. He completed the 100 mile “Mountains of Misery” race twice, the last at the age of 65! He could often be seen riding his bicycle through town towing his two beloved Shelties behind in a trailer. For his 80th birthday, his kids gave him an electronic bike which he completed over 10,000 miles on in less than 3 years!

He was an inspiration for us to continue learning. In his final years, Bull became a certified HAM operator (after taking all three tests on the same day!) and built his own radios, which was reminiscent of when he built a console colored TV back in the 70s while taking a Heathkit mail-order TV repair certification course. He consumed audio books and puzzles voraciously, amazing those around him with his extensive knowledge.

Bull's last days in able health were spent strolling the Hahn Horticulture Garden with his dog, Evie. His family would like to thank the staff there for their kindness, particularly in this last difficult year. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Garden in his memory.

<https://hahngarden.vt.edu/support.html>

Bull will be buried at sea at a date yet to be determined. No local service will be held.

Tribute Wall

RT

“ Bull Durham was laid to rest upon the “carrier” reef the U.S.S. Oriskany on June 27, 1025.



Rebecca Todd - June 30, 2025 at 12:48 AM

RT

“ 2 files added to the album Bull Durham



Rebecca Todd - November 04, 2024 at 10:38 AM

DB

“ Dearest Kathy and family, I was so saddened to read the F8 post that Bull had passed away. You and your family are in my thoughts and prayers. Scotty truly admired Bull!

Deborah Bates - October 31, 2024 at 02:28 PM