



Richard Babson Linnekin, Sr.

July 16, 1921 - June 3, 2018

Richard Babson Linnekin Sr, Captain, USN (Ret), died peacefully in his home on June 2, 2018. Richard was born in Natick, Massachusetts on July 16, 1921. He became enamored with flying at a very early age, and dreamed of becoming a Naval Aviator. Given Richard's remarkable interest in airplanes and flying, his father took him to several airshows at Roosevelt Field in Long Island, New York. The 11-year-old Richard sat in the cabin of a Beechcraft airplane and later described being "gloriously unprepared" for the "exotic-looking handles and levers" of the instrument panel. He also wrote "The aura of comfortable, adventurous magnificence was overpowering." It was very clearly love at first sight. The intelligence, attention to detail, sense of wonder and passion in those words reflected how Richard lived his entire life.

Richard entered the United States Naval Academy in July of 1940. Though a member of the class of 1944, he graduated in June of 1943 as part of the accelerated wartime program. Soon thereafter, he deployed to the Pacific theater of WWII for a year on the USS Louisville. He received his pilot wings in 1945 and graduated from the US Navy Test Pilot School in 1951. During his career as a Naval Aviator, Richard flew over 50 varieties of military aircraft that ranged from World War II era to supersonic jets, such as the F-4 "Phantom" and F-8 "Crusader". He was commanding officer of a squadron of F-8 Crusaders in the early 1960's. These aircraft, and Richard's experiences flying them, are chronicled in his book "Eighty Knots to Mach 2: Forty-Five Years in the Cockpit".

Richard met Jacqueline Marie Mills in 1958 and they married in November of 1959. Their son Richard Jr was born in 1960. Marie's first husband was also a Naval Aviator and had died in a plane crash. Richard adopted her daughter (Diana) and was a wonderful father to both children. When Richard retired from the Navy in 1967, he and Marie moved the family to Annapolis. In addition to being amazing parents, they delighted in spending time together sailing, doing photography, traveling, entertaining and even just chatting about their day each evening. They had been married for 58 years when Marie died in February of 2017.

After retiring from the Navy, Richard worked as an electrical engineer for 23 years at Westinghouse Defense and Electronics Center near BWI airport. His vast experience in Naval Aviation was an ideal background for his work with radar systems in military aircraft. His work led to extensive travel in Japan and Israel, which he enjoyed tremendously.

In the mid-seventies, Richard began to teach flying at the NAFC, a Navy flying club. He flew and taught there until approximately 2004, serving as President for several years. An annual tradition that he treasured was to go flying and perform aerial acrobatics on or around his birthday. He flew until he was 83 and loved every moment of it. Richard also loved to teach flying. He had many students, notably including his son Richard Jr. (USNA class of 1983) who was flying airplanes before he had his driver's license. Richard Sr. was very proud of his son's career as a Marine aviator. Another of Richard Sr's students was Stephen Frick (USNA, class of 1986) who became a Space Shuttle astronaut. During the almost 30 years that he taught, Richard mentored and trained hundreds of pilots.

In addition to his passion for flying, Richard appreciated fast cars and in his 20's raced MGs. He thoroughly enjoyed driving a gorgeous red Porsche for much of his eighth decade. Richard also had a life-long love of sailing and sailed the bay for many years in his Dickerson 35' Ketch, the "Bonhomme Richard". He loved music, both live and recorded. He and Marie frequently attended performances by various jazz artists when the Maryland Inn's "King of France" Tavern was open. He had an extensive collection of music on CDs and very much enjoyed listening to them through his final days.

Richard lived on his own the last years of his life. Though he stopped driving at age 93, he took cabs everywhere he wished to go and could often be found enjoying a fine meal at Jalapenos or having a drink with a long-standing group of friends at Mike's Crab House on the South River.

Richard is survived by 3 children. Jocelyn Linnekin, his daughter from his first marriage, Diana, Richard Jr., as well as Richard's wife Jennifer. He had 5 grandchildren, Sarah-Jane, Suzannah, Cole, Abigail and Benjamin. Additional family includes his brother-in-law Mike Woodbury, who became his dear friend, two nieces, Lisa and Marjorie, and two nephews, Mike Jr. and Brian. Richard was a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather, uncle, and friend. He was beloved by the many people and communities that came to know him and will be greatly missed. He will be interred at the Columbarium on the grounds of his beloved Naval Academy. There will be a party to celebrate his life in the Fall. Those wishing to attend should RSVP to RBL.Memorial@gmail.com for more information. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the Navy Annapolis Flight Center, Inc., 3090 Solomons Island Rd, Edgewater, MD 21037. They will be creating an award in

his name for aspiring young pilots.