



Skip Richardson – A Life Well Lived

It is with deep sadness and heavy hearts that we announced the death of one of our colleagues, Skip Richardson, on April 25, 2013. Skip was a visionary, mentor, and great contributor to our team at LEID Products. Skip will be greatly missed by LEID's team not only for his professional contributions, but also for his commitment, friendship, zest for life and giving spirit. In this issue of the LEIDing Edge Newsletter we are honoring his memory and celebrating his life. We think you will find his life both inspirational and interesting.

First and foremost, Skip was a family man. It was clear to all of us at LEID that Skip cherished his family. On June 22nd of last year he celebrated his 38th wedding anniversary with his wife Kathleen. He emailed our team that day to share how happy he was to have Kathleen – he even included a wedding picture! In addition to being a loving husband to his wife, Skip was very proud to have his legacy be survived by his two sons, Brent and Blake (along with Blake's wife Brittan).



After recovering from a stroke in August, Skip was diagnosed with cancer in November 2012. It can be said with confidence; Skip never gave up sharing the joy of his life and laughter with those around him. Four months after the cancer diagnosis, Skip was still dancing alongside Kathleen at his son's wedding. He was so proud and thankful to be able to attend Blake and Brittan's wedding this past March. As Kathleen shared with us, he made a deep impact on the lives of their sons, and his presence will be greatly missed. It was not unusual for him to speak to his sons multiple times a day. His relationship was very close with each of them.

A week prior to his passing, Skip was still diligently pursuing new LEID business initiatives in Washington D.C. and he even piloted his last flight amongst friends. For the team at LEID, the way Skip embraced his work with such drive and passion, even with the health issues he was facing, was nothing short of extraordinary – we were all in awe of his resolve.



We also enjoyed the stories Skip would share with us which would make us stop and think about the deeper meaning of life in general. In Skip's own words, he shared with us, "I am a rich man beyond my wildest dreams. I have come to appreciate it's not the stuff you have amassed in life that really determines your success, but the footsteps you leave behind... That's my two cents worth on the true meaning of life." We shared one of Skip's stories in a [LEID Facebook](#) post on April 25th it really shows the type of positive effect he had on the lives of those he touched.





Skip accomplished much in his life. Born in 1953 in New York, Skip's family moved to California when he was just three. In his early years Skip had a passion for baseball; he was the prized batter who helped his high school team win the championship. He even earned a college scholarship to the University of Southern California to play; however, he decided to forgo the scholarship. With the Vietnam War in full swing, he proudly decided to serve his country by joining the United States Air Force (USAF). This was no surprise to those who knew Skip well; he was

a natural born aviator, soaring through his first solo cross country flight at the age of 18. Two of his four years in the USAF included active combat as part of a select top-secret squadron conducting secret strategic reconnaissance missions which involved being dropped into the jungle in Vietnam to recover what was, at the time, top-secret drones that went down in warfare. Given the danger of these missions, he was one of just two who survived in their small squadron to return home. Skip courageously served our country earning the Air Force Medal of Commendation which is presented for sustained acts of heroism and valorous actions in direct contact with an enemy.

When he returned home, his experience in the Air Force and his fondness of flying inspired him to become an aircraft mechanic attending Northrop University he obtained his Airframe & Power Plant license to work on jet aircraft. But Skip's love of aviation was too strong to stop there; he decided he also wanted to know how to design aircraft. He continued his studies at Northrop University and acquired his Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering and Aircraft Maintenance.

Skip's career was full of intriguing endeavors and unique opportunities as an executive in corporate management and business development, first in the aviation industry and then in other high technology markets. He spent more than 20 years at the VP level with Fortune 200 companies and had extensive international and domestic experience. With Department of Defense top-secret clearance, Skip even worked on secret initiatives involving the CIA. He knew people all over the world. Skip had a unique way of



establishing working relationship which grew into lasting friendships. His wife, Kathleen, has received emails the past few weeks from many of his colleagues from all over the world, each with messages of how he will be deeply missed and the strong impact he made on so many lives. As she told us, "I am coming to learn, so many wonderful things in these recent days that affirms the very things I admired and loved about him. He was an amazing man."

After his family, aviation was Skip's passion. He would fly his plane, named 28 Yankee N21284 (a single-engine Cessna 182), every weekend and enjoy the camaraderie of about 15 men whom he had grown to be close friends with at West Houston Airport. Many weekends, they would enjoy a flight up to a little



diner called Southern Flyer Diner, in Brenham, TX; they would fly up there for a burger, good conversation and many laughs. Skip must have been smiling when his aviation buddies decided to bring his family to the airport he called home to pay tribute to their fallen pilot friend. It was an emotional day, to say the least, for Kathleen and her sons as the men whom Skip had enjoyed spending his weekends with, honored him with a flight line of more than a half a dozen planes to salute his family; followed by his ashes being spread in flight above. This was followed by

the 'missing man' formation, an aerial salute performed by 4 bonanza planes performing a flyby in tight formation with one abruptly pulling up out of the formation while the rest of the formation continues in level flight until all aircraft are out of sight. The aircraft that performed the pull-up and split off from the formation did so to honor Skip, their missing friend, and it represents his departure to the heavens. A moving tribute to say the least, surely Skip was smiling down from heaven above. Although his physical presence is gone from us, his spirit truly lives on.

