

Obituary

Michael Ray Sparks, age 65, of Inverness, died 28 September 2017 at his home on the lake. Michael was born 26 February 1952 in Clarksville, Arkansas to R.B. and Meta Sparks.

Michael spent most of his childhood in Central Illinois. He graduated in 1970 from Mt. Zion High School in Mt Zion, Illinois where he met and married his wife, Wendy Stonecipher, 26 June 1971. Soon after graduation, he joined the National Guard and was a wrecker driver then a Helicopter Crew Chief for six years. He joined the US Army and graduated from Helicopter Flight School at Ft. Rucker, Alabama in 1977. He then began his distinguished career as an Army Aviator and Instructor Pilot. He went to the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California in 1985 and became fluent in Spanish. He instructed students to fly in the School of Americas from South America during his twenty six years in the military.



After retiring from the US Army in 1997, Michael taught at Ft. Rucker with Civil Service about a year. It didn't take him long to figure out that he wasn't done flying and he was off chasing the next adventure. He then began his second career in 1998 as a Contract Helicopter Pilot for the State Department with DynCorp and continued to serve his country eradicating drugs and training from the jungles of South America to the mountains of Afghanistan and everywhere in between. His true passion was to be in the cockpit. He made an undeniable impact on every person he met, worked with, and trained. After his flying days came to an end he worked at Walt Disney World in Orlando Florida and enjoyed the opportunity to see so many people having the time of their lives on a daily basis.

Michael is survived by his wife, Wendy, his two sons, Michael Paul Sparks and his wife, Kara, and Benjamin Wyatt Sparks; four grandchildren, Alexis, Kinsey, Caden, and Kora; two brothers, Marty Sparks and his wife, Judy, of Findlay Illinois and Mark Sparks of Shreveport Louisiana; many Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Nieces, Nephews, and countless friends who all loved him dearly.

Memorials: EARS, PO Box 306, Citra, FL 32113, Humane Society, or Habitat for Humanity, Inverness, FL. Visitation will be held from 12pm-2pm, Tuesday, October 3, 2017 with service beginning at 2 pm at Brown Funeral Home & Crematory in Lecanto, FL.

Graveside service with military honors will be held at 10 am, Wednesday, October 4, 2017 at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, FL.

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