



Frederick "Gene" Windels

February 26, 1932 – March 10, 2011

Frederick "Gene" Windels, 79, of Tucson, AZ and formerly of Paxton, NE., died Thursday, March 10, 2011 in the Tucson Medical Center.

Gene was born February 26, 1932 in Lexington, Nebr. to Fritz and Elsie Holmstedt Windels. He grew up in a large extended, very close-knit family in Paxton where he graduated from high school in 1950.

Gene attended Wayne State College until joining the Air Force on June 30, 1952. On May 23, 1953 he received his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant. In June 1955 he married and had two children, a son Terry Gene and a daughter Annette Renee. The couple later divorced.



While stationed at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue, Nebr., he received a Bachelor Degree in History from UNO in 1964. On September 4, 1970 Gene married Marlene Heidbrink and became a stepfather to her children Deb and Steve.

During his 23 years in the Air Force he became a Master Navigator and had over ten duty stations which included Travis AFB, CA; Newfoundland; Kadena AFB, Okinawa, Japan; and the Pentagon. Gene was part of the Strategic Air Command at Offutt AFB in Nebr. and was involved in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. While stationed in Japan he flew reconnaissance missions over Vietnam and worked on a project to develop unmanned reconnaissance drones. The majority of his work was in reconnaissance and military intelligence. His time at the Pentagon was spent working in a vault analyzing intelligence data and then briefing the Joint Chiefs.

He retired from the Air Force on July 1, 1975 as a Lt. Colonel and the family moved from Washington, D.C. to Tucson, AZ. He attended the University of Arizona, working on a Masters Degree in Library of Science. In 1978 Gene then moved to the San Francisco Bay area working for an information database company. With his knowledge of government contracts he assisted the company in obtaining a contract to create an energy information database for the Department of Energy. He finished the Library Science degree in 1982.

During his second retirement he volunteered in the prison library at Vacaville Prison where he helped prisoners obtain their GEDs, teaching many how to read and write first. Gene moved back to Tucson in 2002. Preceding him in death were his parents.

Survivors include his daughter Renee and her husband Mark Asher of Bristow, VA., his son Terry Windels of Tucson, and one grandchild: Courtney Young of Omaha; One brother Dick Windels of Forestgrove, Montana; and one sister Donna Eberspacher of Thermopolis, Wy. and several nieces and nephews.

Visitation will be Friday, March 18, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Draucker Funeral Home. The funeral service will be Saturday, March 19, at 2 p.m. in the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paxton with Rev. Judy Gifford and JA Welsh, Interim Lay Minister officiating. Interment is in the Paxton Cemetery with military honors by the American Legion Post #303 of Paxton. Memorials have been established to the Keith County Food Pantry and the United Service Organization, PO Box 96322, Washington, DC 20090-6322.

Online condolences may be sent to webmaster@drauckerfh.com.

Draucker Funeral Home of Ogallala is in charge of arrangements.