

DICK KORAN (1935 - 2000)

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you of the death of our long-time former Wings & Things editor Dick Koran. He passed away peacefully at Clearwater, Florida, on May 26, three months before his 65th birthday.

It is difficult to even estimate the influence Dick has had on the WAHS, the CAPTAIN'S LOG and the wing-collecting hobby around the world. He had friends everywhere. Friends who could always count on him for advice and whom he was always more than happy to help.

Over the years he built up an enviable collection of flight crew wings and he generously shared photographs of these and details about their background freely with readers of the Log and with anyone else who asked.

Dick published his first Wings & Things column in the Spring 1982 issue of the Log and I always read them with much pleasure, even though I am not a wing collector myself. I found the background he provided fascinating. When I became editor of the Log, I was always amazed at how clean his copy was, and at the high quality of the photographs he provided. He maintained this high standard right until his final column in the Spring 1996 issue, a total of 56 columns of invaluable and lasting information. By then he had become too ill to continue and he turned the column over to his good friend and fellow collector, Charlie Dolan, the column's current editor.

I will always remember the Airliners International conventions I spend in his company and the company of his wife, Diane. He was always "a barrel of laughs" as the expression goes, always full of life and with a long line of stories that not only made you personally feel good, but also gave you the warm feeling you were with a man who truly loved people.

Richard Lenzke Koran was born in Racine, Wisconsin, on August 16, 1935. After serving two years in the U.S. Air Force, he graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a degree in Journalism. He worked for McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis, Missouri and Phoenix, Arizona, and for Beechcraft in Wichita, Kansas, before joining American Airlines as a pilot in 1965. He flew the BAC 111, 707, DC-10 and the 727, retiring as a Captain on the 727 in September 1994.

Following his service in the USAF, Dick served with the National Guard in St. Louis, Phoenix and Wichita, retiring as a Lieutenant-Colonel from the 127th refueling unit of the Wisconsin Air National Guard based in Milwaukee, where he had flown the KC-97G aerial tanker, a sister to the civil Stratocruiser.

Dick was a member of the Quiet Birdmen, the World Airline Historical Society, The Florida Aviation Historical Society and the Grey Eagles (the organization of retired AA pilots).

It is a pity that Dick will never know how big a void he leaves in the lives of his wife Diane and daughter Julie, in that of the members of his extended family and in that of the airline memorabilia collecting fraternity around the world. He will be missed by all.



Dick's funeral took place in Racine, Wisconsin, on June 2.

Dick, good friend, Requiescat in Pace - Rest in Peace.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dick Koran".

A Thank You from Diane

Diane Koran has asked me to print the following:

"Dear WAHS Members,

"Words cannot express my appreciation for the kind cards and notes I've received from so many of you regarding Dick's death. The beautiful, ever-blooming rose tree the Society sent for Dick's funeral was such a special tribute to him that it's been planted at his graveside and will be well-tended by his sister, who lives in Racine.

"Dick was very proud to have been a member of the WAHS and valued the lasting friendships he made with so many other members. He especially enjoyed writing Wings & Things for the Captain's Log for those many years - it was a "labor of love" for one of the things he loved the most - aviation - in any way, shape or form, and it gave him great pleasure to know his column was enjoyed by so many others.

"I thank you all for being part of Dick's life . . . and for being his friends.

"Sincerely, Diane Koran"