

Armen Charles Avakian, 1953–2025



Armen Charles Avakian of Indianapolis died in Haarlem, Netherlands, on February 24, 2025. He was born on September 1, 1953, just weeks before his family moved from Leominster to Weston, Massachusetts. He attended public schools there and in McLean, Virginia, finishing high school in Fresno, California, after his family moved there in 1970.

During his school years, Armen played trumpet and swam on the swim team. After high school, he attended California State University at Fresno and graduated in 1975 with a degree in journalism. He joined the Air Force, attaining the rank of Captain and served as Public Affairs Staff Officer at bases in Southern California, Florida, Missouri, and Greenland.

Armen had an early interest in aviation. From the age of nine, he accompanied his parents to airports, where he watched airliners take off and land and observed the different aircraft with their varied color schemes. He learned to fly in small planes in Fresno, then began his career as a pilot with Air Kentucky. He then worked for Continental Express, a regional airline affiliated with Continental Airlines. From there, he moved up to mainline Continental and became a first officer on Boeing 737, the culmination of his dream to fly the big jets. After retiring as an active airline pilot, he continued his flying activity as a Certified Flight Instructor teaching others.

Armen cherished his Armenian heritage. He learned Armenian and visited the old country. In Fresno, he attended St. Paul Armenian Church and served in various roles there and in St. Mary Armenian Church in Washington, D.C.

Settling in Indianapolis, IN, he found friends in the Indianapolis Hiking Club. He also enjoyed swimming and was a member of social clubs, a singles club at St. Luke's Church, and the Indianapolis Postcard Club.

Armen's passion was collecting airline memorabilia, airplane models, and vintage aviation postcards. He regularly attended conventions sponsored by the World Airline Historical Society and even served as a judge of the postcard contest at Airliners International. He was attending such a meeting, the Amsterdam Aviation Collectors Fair, doing what he loved best, when he died unexpectedly at age 71 due to a cardiac event.

He was a kind and gentle person and saw good in the people he met. He is survived by his sister Armine Mortimer and his brothers Arra and Arten and by many cousins, nieces, and nephews. His parents Arra and Georgia Avakian and his sister Arsine Peterson predeceased him. As Armen's family is scattered, no ceremony is planned. His ashes too will be scattered, in one of his favorite places.