

Robert J. Wegner

Jet-pilot and golfer, Robert J. Wegner, has died at the age of 71. He was born to Helen and Donald Wegner on October 7th, 1949 in Queens, New York, where he matriculated until leaving for active duty at 19. Bob Wegner's aviation career began with The United States Army, as a helicopter pilot during The Vietnam War in South East Asia. During his service, he was shot down several times; not only did he survive but he saved the lives of several other service men in the aftermath.

The Army Commendation Medal and The Distinguished Flying Cross were awarded to him for, "single acts of heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight." He began a nearly fifty year marriage to Terry Monica Kraus at a Long Island celebration hall in 1973. They had two children together, Nicole and Zach. Although the family spent the majority of their lives as residents of Gaylordsville, CT, Bob was a man of the world, traveling to almost every continent during his storied career as a jet pilot for Time Magazine and The Rockefeller Family's *Wayfayer Ketch Company*. He flew Gulfstream jets for decades and later became one of the *NetJets* company's pilots. In his early forties he began his journeyman pursuit of golf: a sport which he mastered up to a 4 handicap.

Many in the New Milford community knew him as a carpenter, a handy-man, chef, and baker, notably through the abundance of loaves of bread and "to die for" chocolate croissants baked for friends during the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic. His handiwork lives on in The John Pettibone School's wooden playground and backdoor patios across the tri-state area. An avid learner, reader and seeker, Bob often reminded those around him that, "Nobody ever learned anything while they were talking." For almost thirty years he led a life of sobriety, and shepherded many others to do the same in the meeting spaces of Alcoholics Anonymous. Some of the local men in recovery are said to have never missed a meeting helmed by "Bob the Pilot." Ever since his October diagnosis he fought to live against the growing metastasis with the same passion he had done everything. Only in his final months could he ever be observed lying down.

He left his body on Wednesday June 22nd, 2021 after the 10-month battle with esophageal cancer had ended. He is survived by his daughter Nicole, his son Zach, his wife Terry, his mother Helen, and his brother-in-arms Joseph Sheeran. Bob will be honored next to the 18th hole in a celebration of life at *The Club at River Oaks* at 2 Evans Hill Road, Sherman, Ct on July 11th, 2021 from 1-5 pm.

