



James Alan Heidecker

March 23, 1942 - April 23, 2026

JAMES ALAN (Jim) HEIDECKER, 84, of Vallejo, California, passed away peacefully at home on April 23, 2026, with both of his daughters by his side. Jim had a very long battle with Alzheimer's Disease.

Jim was born on March 23, 1942, in Fountain Hill, Pennsylvania, to Paul William (Bunk) Sr and Nina Ruth (Cope) Heidecker.

He attended Fountain Hill schools and graduated in 1960. Jim worked at his family's Atlantic gas station in Fountain Hill throughout high school. He also enjoyed riding in his dad's beer delivery truck as a kid.

Jim joined the U.S. Air Force right after graduation. His first assignment was in Duluth, Minnesota. His second was at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Just before being stationed at the Academy, his future wife, Netha Sue Brown, from Vallejo, California, happened to be visiting her sister, Donna Markle, whose husband was stationed at the Academy. Sue decided to apply for a civilian job at the Academy and was hired in April 1962 to work at Headquarters. Jim began his assignment with the Candidate Advisory Service at Headquarters, U.S.A.F. Academy. They met in May 1962 and were married December 22, 1962, at Broadmoor's Pauline Chapel then honeymooned at the Broadmoor Hotel.

Jim's final U.S.A.F. assignment was to Lindsey Air Station in Wiesbaden Germany. Once Jim was settled in Germany, his wife, Sue, and their kids, Mark and Christine, moved to Germany to be with him. They were both excited to live in Germany, where they both had family history. Sadly, after only a few months in Germany, Jim was discharged from the U.S.A.F. on medical disability. He and his family returned to the States. Initially, to Pennsylvania, until they decided where they wanted to settle. The family took a trip to California to visit Sue's family, and Jim was very impressed with the year-round mild climate, so they decided to stay in Vallejo, California, to raise their family. Soon after settling in Vallejo, daughter Jill was born, completing Jim's family.

Once Jim's U.S.A.F. Disability Retirement was processed, Jim worked as a civilian at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard in the Design Division with his father-in-law, Donald D. M. Brown. After having worked through high school at his dad's Atlantic gas station, Jim knew he wanted to work a 2nd job at a local gas station in Vallejo and he ended up working at two gas stations over the years. He met many people and formed lasting relationships while working at the stations. Eventually, Jim decided to open his own business, Solano Tire Service, Inc., it was a 24-hour emergency roadside tire service. Jim's business was remarkably successful and after a few years on his own, he hired a couple of employees. Once his son, Mark, was old enough, Mark and his friend Ken Gini, worked for Solano Tire Service. Jim's nephew, Michael Rau, flew to California from Pennsylvania for numerous summers to work for Solano Tire Service. Jim won the government contract for tire services on Mare Island Naval Shipyard and spent the next many years there until his retirement in 1992.

Jim loved bowling and spent many years in various Bowling Leagues. He also loved building model trucks, cars, and airplanes. He loved model railroading and had an extensive Texaco bank collection as well as his many

woodworking projects.

Jim and Sue were both continually active in the Camp Fire Girls (Sem Yeta Council,) and Y-Indian Guides (Yosemite Nation). Jim was on the local Board of Directors for both organizations and the family maintained the campgrounds for both groups for many years. The family participated in 4th of July parades for many years with both groups. Many lasting friendships were made. He had so much fun helping take care of Camp Gold Hollow for the Sem Yeta Council of the Camp Fire Girls. The whole family, along with a couple of other families, had a lot of work parties at the camp, opening the camp every spring to get it ready for all the summer campers and then closed it up in the fall.

Jim was involved with the Vallejo Suburban Kiwanis Club for many years. He enjoyed the camaraderie as well as the fund raising/charity work that the Kiwanis club did. He loved to help raise money for different organizations in the community as well as helping to run the Kiwanis Club's fireworks stand around the 4th of July.

After his retirement in 1992 he opened "Papa's Daycare" and began babysitting his oldest grandchildren. It was a full-service daycare...Papa changed diapers, bottle fed the babies, loaded the babies in their car seats to take Andrew to school and later did the same for both Megan and Jamie. After school, the kids attended "Papa's Homework Club" and just as he did with his three kids, Papa helped his grandkids do their homework. They took field trips to the slot car track. The kids loved dipping their Mother's English Tea cookies in milk with Papa while working on homework. They would often make 'Purple Mac' for dinner...Kraft Macaroni & Cheese with pickled beets (turning the Mac purple.) The kids loved tricking their Papa into eating Sour Skittles by telling him that they were extra sweet Skittles only to have Papa spit them out when

he realized they were sour. Papa taught his grandkids many naughty tricks like throwing a towel into the running ceiling fan! They also loved it when Papa wrestled around on the floor with them, pretending to beat them up so Papa's big black lab, Buddy, would get all riled up trying to protect the kids from Papa. He was the best Papa ever but was just a big kid himself.

He is survived by his three children, Mark (Maria) Heidecker, Christine Gartley and Jill Heidecker, all of California. Seven grandchildren, Andrew Garton, Ryan Heidecker, Megan (Vincent) Barma, James (Jessica) Tamargo, all of California, Samantha (and fiancé Asa) Ryser of Washington, Sarah King of Arizona, and Joshua Landers of California. All four grandsons have 'James' in their names, to honor their Papa. Nine great-grandchildren, Vincent and Oliver Barma, Liliana and Isabel Tamargo all of California, Donovan, Nehemiah and Kinsley King of Arizona, Bridgette, and soon to be born, Charlotte Ryser of Washington. Three sisters, Patricia Rapp, Deborah (Jesse) Repash, all of Pennsylvania, Susan (Glenn) Larrabee of New York, two brothers, Richard (Kathy) Heidecker, and Michael (Darlene) Heidecker, sister-in-law Barbara Heidecker, as well as many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife Susan and his older brother Paul (Skip) Heidecker, Jr.

Cremation services handled by Fairmont Cremation Services. Service will be private. Interment at All Souls Catholic Cemetery will be private.