



AAC Publications

Donald J. Liska, 1929 – 2014

Don Liska, 85, died at home after a brief illness, with Alice, his wife of 59 years, by his side.

Born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Don received his bachelor and master's degrees in mechanical engineering from the University of Wisconsin. Don and Alice were avid members of the UofW Hoofers, an outdoor enthusiast club where they discovered their love of climbing and the outdoors. Don was drafted into the U.S. Army immediately upon his graduation and served for two years.

Don began his career as an engineer in Culver City, California, at Hughes Aircraft. They moved on to Seattle to work at Boeing. During this time he and Alice lived in a trailer that had minimal indoor plumbing. This "temporary" living arrangement lasted for 10 years and is a testament to both Don and Alice's hardiness, sense of adventure, and devotion to each other.

Don took a staff position at Los Alamos National Laboratory in 1966, and, with Alice, immediately joined the Los Alamos Mountaineers. He became a well-respected, multifaceted engineer, designing and building particle accelerators. His career led him to sabbaticals at Rutherford Laboratory in England and Cern in Geneva Switzerland. Don retired in 1993 after 27 years of service.

He loved New Mexico not only because of his rewarding career at the lab but also because of its natural beauty and the outdoor adventures that were readily available to him. He was a member of the American Alpine Club for many years and became an honorary lifetime member of the Los Alamos Mountaineers. He was one of the strongest and most active members, with many first ascents to his credit. Away from home, Don did much climbing in Colorado and Alaska.

In addition to their love of climbing, both he and Alice were enthusiastic backpackers, downhill and cross country skiers, hikers, cyclists, and canoeists. Additionally, Don was passionate about folk dancing, politics, world travel, U.S. and world history, the environment, and animals. He greeted everybody with a warm smile and always made you feel welcome and important.

Don once said, "When we think back on our lives, it's the exciting trips and outdoor adventures that stand out. Not the many days in the office." Don will be missed by his countless friends and acquaintances; whose lives he has touched and influenced.

Cathy Grastataro

Images



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