

Lt Col William Simon III, 80, of State College, PA, died on February 11, 2018 from natural causes. He was the son of the late William Simon Jr. and the late Jayne H. Simon. Born in Pittsburgh, PA, Bill was a 1959 graduate of Pennsylvania State University, where he was a member of Pi Kappa Phi fraternity, of which his father was a founding member of the Penn State chapter. He was a member of a unique group known as the Tavern Alumni, a group of former students who worked at the legendary restaurant while they attended PSU. Bill also earned two master's degrees and a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California (USC) in Management Science and Systems Management.

During his four years at Penn State, Bill was a member of the USAF ROTC program. He served as Commander of the Arnold Air Society during his senior year. Bill was also a member of the Pershing Rifles and ROTC honorary drill team. Upon graduation he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. Bill attended Officer's Preflight training at Lackland Air Force Base (San Antonio, TX) prior to entering Undergraduate Navigator training at James Connally Air Force Base (Waco, TX). After receiving his Navigator wings Bill was assigned to Castle Air Force Base, (Merced, CA) where he served as a navigator and instructor in KC-135 air refueling squadrons flying air refueling missions all around the globe. Bill transitioned into the RC-135 as part of the strategic reconnaissance program, flying peripheral electronic intelligence collections against enemy electronic emissions near Soviet and Chinese territory. While in this program, he was assigned to Offutt Air Force Base (Omaha, NE) and Kadena Air Base (Okinawa, Japan). On one mission, his aircraft was "escorted" by a Soviet MIG jet fighter while in international airspace. Bill flew C-130s while assigned to Clark Air Base (Philippines). Later he served at Strategic Air Command (Omaha, NE) and Ramstein Air Base (Rhineland, Germany).

Lt Col William Simon III was a Master Navigator with 5,200 total flying hours. He was awarded numerous decorations including: Air Medal w/1 OLC; Air Medal w/8 OLC, Air Force Commendation Medal; Presidential Unit Citation; Air Force Outstanding Unit Award w/ device and 7 OLC; National Defense Medal; Vietnam Service Medal; RVN Gantry Cross w/ Palm; RVN Campaign Medal; and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Bill retired after 25 years of service. His last assignment on active duty was Director of Operations at the USAF Headquarters at Tempelhof Central Airport in West Berlin, Germany. Bill remained in West Berlin where he taught computer science and mathematics courses at the University of Maryland, European Division. In 1992 he returned to the United States, moving back to Pennsylvania where he taught computer systems courses at Penn State.

Active in the local State College community, he was involved with the Penn State Alumni Association, Penn State Hockey Boosters, Penn State Men's Volleyball Boosters, Penn State Women's Volleyball Boosters, the State College Community Theatre and was a recipient of the Shirley Andrews Award (April 2012) for his volunteer service with the American Red Cross.

Bill must have had high-octane fuel in his blood, for he was a member of the Porsche Club of America for over 40 years -- an organization of Porsche enthusiasts. In 1997, he co-founded PCA's Keystone Region and served as President, Vice President, Region Secretary, Member at Large, and was editor of the region newsletter. Long before that, he was a member of the Okinawa Sports Car Club and served as Vice President in 1968-1969. He is survived by his three children, Christine E. Simon (Seattle, Washington), Barbara L. Simon (Long Beach, California), and William Simon 4th (Aspen, Colorado). He is also survived by his brother Robert J. Simon (Huntersville, North Carolina), PSU class of 1978. He was preceded in death by his brother, G. Ronald Simon, PSU class of 1963.

In lieu of flowers, please make online donations to the Alzheimer's Association (www.alz.org) which advances research to end Alzheimer's and dementia while enhancing care for those living with the disease.

*This is a shocker and a tough one. No word that he had been ill.
Bill was on Curzon's crew at Kadena, and with me on Jimmy Jones' crew 1970-71, on the MiG firing incident mission.
A regular at reunions, he had an interesting and varied career.
VO, Max*