Thomas A Kelly Obituary

Tom was born on 15 May 1933 at his Grandma Ashley’s home in Wellsburg, West Virginia to Christopher (Danny) and Jeanette Kelly. At an early age they moved to the Buffalo area to seek work at Bethlehem Steel. Tom grew up in Woodlawn and Lake Beach community just south of the steel plant. During his senior year, Tom became a 2nd alternate to the US Naval Academy. After the primary candidate and the 1st alternate did not pass the physical, Tom was set to report to Annapolis. The day before he was to leave he received a telegram stating that he was too young. He needed to be 17 on 1 May and he was only 16. The day before Tom’s graduation the Korean War broke out. Tom wanted to join the Marine Corps, but he was 17 and his mother would not sign for him, so he attended 1 year of Pharmacy School at the University of Buffalo.

In September 1951, Tom entered the Corps. He became an air crewman on the AD Skyraider specializing in electronic countermeasures. He was sent to Korea in 1952 where he was part of the 1st Marine Air Wing. He left the Corps in 1954 with the rank of Staff Sergeant.

Upon his return to the states he remained in California working at Lytton and Hughes Industries and also attending Santa Monica City College. He transferred to UCLA and graduated in January 1963 with a degree in Engineering and five children.

Tom started working for Southern California Edison upon graduation. He became involved in the dam maintenance and safety program for their 32 major dams. He remained in this field for 33 years. During this time he became active in conferences and training with such conferences as Asilomar, the forerunner to the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO). He served on the Advisory Committee of ASDSO and also was a founding member of their Peer Review Committee. Upon his retirement in 1996, Tom served ASDSO as the lead engineer for the Peer Review of the Department of the Interior. Tom loved his job and the challenges it offered.

In 1972, Tom married the love of his life Molly, and together they became world travelers following their passion for SCUBA diving and underwater photography. Tom also loved fine wine and gourmet cooking.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents, Danny & Jeanette, his sister Margaret Greene and his daughter Sue Ann Kelly. He is survived by his wife of 45+ years Molly, his children Debra Sauno, Dawn Kelly, Christopher Kelly, Elizabeth Critchfield, 8 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.