



# HERITAGE FLIGHT MUSEUM

Where History Flies in Skagit County

Volunteer/Member Newsletter

Fall 2024

## A Tribute to Bill Anders

By Daniel Benveniste

On October 19, 2024, friends and family came together to celebrate the life of Bill Anders at the Heritage Flight Museum in Burlington, Washington. Bill Anders was one of the first three astronauts to leave Earth orbit, enter lunar orbit, and see, with his own eyes, the far side of the moon. He was the one that snapped the famous photo of the earthrise over the lunar landscape—an image that served to galvanize the environmental movement.

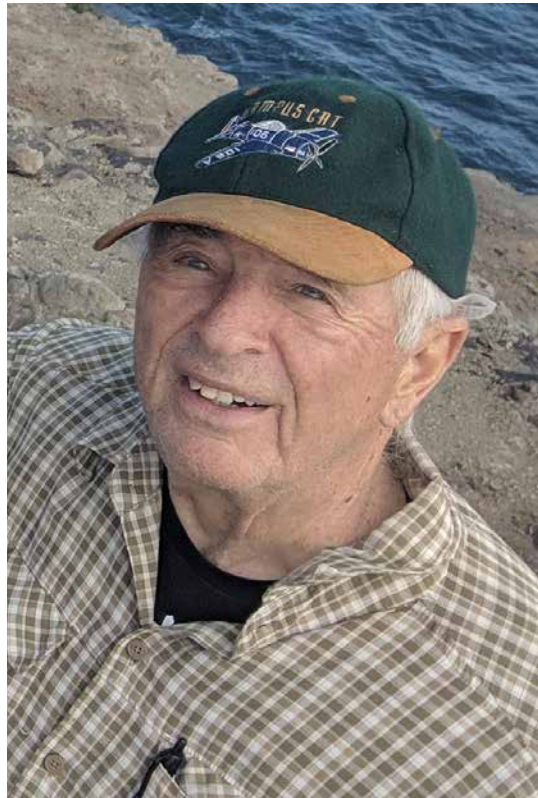
Beyond his Apollo 8 mission he had an illustrious career in leadership positions at NASA, the Atomic Energy Commission, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and as Ambassador to Norway. In 1988, he retired from the Air Force Reserves as a Major General. He then took on high- or top-level administrative roles at General Electric, Textron, and General Dynamics, retiring in 1994.

For the next 30 years Bill devoted himself to flying, airplane racing, co-founding the Heritage Flight Museum with his wife, Valerie, and supporting environmental causes. Bill and Valerie were married 69 years, had 6 children and 13 grandchildren. Bill died in a plane crash on June 7, 2024 at the age of 90.

Over 150 guests gathered at the Heritage Flight Museum where they enjoyed drinks and visiting before watching a video of highlights in Bill Anders' life. Bill and Valerie's son, Greg Anders, was master of ceremonies, a role he performed with dignity, humor, and emotion.

Greg was, however, disappointed to have rain cancel the four aircraft formation "missing man" tribute he had planned as a highlight of the event. That formation was going to be

led by Bill's Grandson Chris, with Greg in the back seat of the museum's T-34, Greg's brother Alan on his wing in Alan's T-6, Craig Nelson on Greg's other wing in Greg's T-6, and Museum friend and supporter Joe Fisher in his own T-6 on Alan's wing. Weather prohibited the safe conduct of what would have been a very fitting tribute to a legendary aviator, Bill Anders.



Valerie Anders read two beautiful letters of condolence, one from President Joe Biden and the other from Vice President Kamala Harris. Greg then read a letter from the President of Iceland, whom the Anders have known personally.

Many have wondered why Bill, an experienced pilot, crashed as he did off the coast of Orcas Island. Greg explained that in the somewhat aggressive turn Bill executed, Bill had a G-induced loss of consciousness – a decrease in the blood flow to the brain causing him to briefly, and fatally, fall asleep.

Greg emotionally expressed the deep gratitude he feels for the opportunity to have had such an extraordinary father and all that it afforded him in his life. He then poignantly noted, "Now I have come

to understand that I am a more average 61-year-old – I have lost my father."

Chris Browne, Director of the National Air and Space Museum, spoke about Bill and Valerie's Heritage Flight Museum (HFM) and the importance of museums. He highlighted the HFM's "1968 Experience" exhibit, which tells the story of a turbulent year in the United States, NASA's build up and crescendo of the Apollo 8 mission, while at the same

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## *“How lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.”*

—A.A. Milne

time including the day-to-day activities, listed in Valerie’s personal calendar prominently displayed in the museum impressing upon us the human side and personal stories behind great achievements.

He noted that museums are the most trusted places in society, second only to family and friends. They contain the nation’s DNA, its fiber and fabric. “It’s who we are, it’s the stories we tell and share for future generations.” “Thank you for including me, it’s a privilege to be here, it’s an incredible privilege to have had moments with Bill and Valerie, and the entire family, and you are a gift to the nation. Thank you.”

“Pepe” (Mark Proulx) began his comments, which had the quality of a comedy routine, by explaining that Bill always introduced him to others as “the world’s second greatest aviator.”

He said, “William A. Anders, everyone knows him in a different way. I know him as ‘Viking,’ some people know him as General; some people know him as a dad, a mentor, a friend, a founder, a contributor, a pilot, an astronaut, a CEO, a hero, and a wingman.”

“I was known in the Air Force as a rule follower, a by-the-book guy. So, something ya gotta know about ‘Viking’ is he was an exception to the rule- and I was his wingman.” “I’ve been on his wing in an F-16. To actually fly with him was amazing. He was the greatest.” “And the thing I want you to know, as ‘the world’s second greatest aviator’ is that the world’s greatest aviator never had to break a rule. He was the exception to the rule. And he never

had to showboat, because he was the show.”

Then Greg’s son, Christopher William Anders, came up to speak about his grandfather. He noted Bill’s “contagious



**HFM Executive Director Greg Anders presents a commemorative coin to longtime friends Jerry and Jan Barto**

passion for science,” his awareness of current space progress and other scientific discoveries. His home was full of rock specimens, many of which looked ordinary, but Bill could tell an interesting geologic story about each. Chris said, “We looked at him and didn’t see big shoes to fill, but we were instead inspired by what we could do if we pursued our curiosity.”

In a room filled with pilots, military people, airplane enthusiasts, museum curators, engineers and the like, Greg introduced his “youngest sister, Diana, goddess of the moon.” Diana took the podium and said her father “was not exactly warm and fuzzy and the kind of father that would attend our

recitals and soccer games and so forth. He occasionally likened himself to an evolved caveman – or semi-evolved. He was occupied with other things and many of the exceptional achievements that have been recognized today.”

“I know nothing about ‘Viking.’ I’ve never heard that before. I don’t like planes. When you’re an astronaut, a test pilot, an ambassador, CEO, a dad, and much more, the chances are slim to none that your kids, any of them, will follow in your footsteps. We do have an Air Force pilot, an artist turned aviator, a civil engineer, a financial analyst, a psychoanalyst, and an academic. I want to highlight something that I so admired and appreciated about our dad. He has always supported me, as well as my siblings and their children, with respect to pursuing our education and professional interests.

“My dad would never want to be considered a tree hugger but reflecting on the significance of Earthrise he stated, ‘The earth is delicate and fragile, but it’s also very finite.’ He instilled in us this love and respect for wildlife and nature and its awesome power.

My father explored not only outer space, but also volcanoes, fjords, canyons, deserts, mountains, jungles, glaciers, and more. And some of my favorite memories are enjoying those adventures with him including sleeping in a snow cave in Norway, hiking down the Grand Canyon, exploring the jungles of Belize, snorkeling in the Cayman Islands, and camping in the High Sierras. Our understanding and

*“In the end, it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.”*

—Abraham Lincoln

caring for our planet, is something we need now more than ever, and I think his kids and his grandkids carry those aspects of my Dad’s legacy into the future.

“When I was little, on the nights he was not traveling for work” after dinner “my father would give me the signal, ‘Pss pss’ and that meant to come sit on his lap, while we both ate chocolate ice cream. I do not remember if we talked much, but I do remember the safety I felt on his lap. He called me ‘Miss Mouse’ and I really worked that youngest child cutsie mouse as much as I could!

“But ultimately my mom had to come in and put me to bed and I’d always say ‘No-o-o, not yet!’ and I’d give him a kiss on the nose before skeddaddling off to bed. We were never able to say goodbye to my father, and I so wish I could have given him a final kiss on the nose before he left. But sometimes when I feel sad, I conjure up the ‘Pss pss’ sound in my mind, which I can’t do without cracking a smile.”

Son Alan Anders brought the assembled guests to their feet for a toast to his father. For a musical touch they heard one of Bill’s favorites,



**Valerie Anders helps lead the singing**

“Ashokan Farewell” and Valerie led them in singing a song about Bill, written by a friend. Greg then presented a video of the “Missing Man Formation,” a traditional aircraft flying salute that pilots conduct in honor of a pilot who has died. It was performed

the Galapagos, and even a more recent road trip down Highway 1 with Brittany where we had fun excursions every step of the way. He held onto his zest for life and loved the learning throughout.”

“Each evening when the sun dips below the horizon, the colors remind



**National Air & Space Museum Director Chris Browne speaks about Bill**

in Bill’s honor at the Reno Air Show two weeks earlier.

Valerie closed the evening’s ceremony saying, “Being married to Bill was never boring. We experienced so much in our lives together, so many moves, so many renovations, so many gardening projects, so many children, so many cross-country drives, so many career changes, so many trips, so many interesting people, so many breakfasts with bacon, so many big dinners around the Norwegian dining table, so many boat trips, so many airplanes, and so many wonderful grandchildren. And one of the things I most respected about Bill was his determination and unmatched work ethic.”

“I have fond memories of us water skiing on Taylor Lake, cross country skiing in Norway, scuba diving in Cozumel, exploring unique wildlife in

me of our rich life together. He loved to watch the sunset with the cat on his lap and glass of wine in his hand.”



**Photos by Karen Hicks**

# Volunteer Spotlight

## Anne and Don Griffin

Anne Griffin is half of a beloved husband-and-wife docent duo at HFM. The other half is Don Griffin, who passed away unexpectedly on May 8 of this year. Losing Don has been a blow to the HFM staff. He was a good friend who gave generously of his time. He and Anne could always be found helping out at the Fly Days and leading the Thursday and Saturday museum tours.

Don and Anne began their marriage in the time of the Apollo space missions, which made a lasting impression on both of them and eventually inspired them to volunteer at the museum. Their wedding took place December 28, 1968, the day after Apollo 8 splashed down in the Pacific. It was a topic she remembers being on everyone's mind even as they tended to all the necessities of the wedding.

Anne Griffin is a native of New Bedford, Massachusetts. As a young girl, she dreamed of becoming a flight attendant. From her grandmother's house located near the airport, Anne used to watch the beacon at night, and if she heard an airplane, she ran out the door looking skyward. She attended airshows at Otis AFB with her uncle.

When the time came to get a job, she interviewed with several airlines looking for the right fit. In the late 1960s, the height/weight requirements were strict. An applicant had to be between five foot two and five foot eight, unmarried and childless at the time of hire. Anne, at five foot five inches, could weigh no more than 124 pounds. Hair was collar length. No jewelry was allowed but one ring and a watch.

Anne went to work for Western Airlines. She was in the last class that trained on the DC-6B. She also flew on the 737, Electra and 720B. The flight



attendants trained in LA and then came up to Seattle for graduation. After an eye-opening week of touring the Seattle area hosted by Seafair Commodore John Jewett, her first words to her skeptical husband-to-be after the trip were, "I know where we're going to live someday."

Among the flights she found memorable was the time a pilot diverted the airplane to fly as low as possible through the Grand Canyon, delaying their arrival by twenty minutes. She recalls another pilot nicknamed "Jimmy Jet," who would wake up a planeload of sleeping passengers to announce, "We are now flying over the Grand Canyon." Nobody could see anything out the windows at night, and then they all wanted coffee.

On another notable flight, she went to Mexico City with the Polish Olympic Rifle Team on board. They so enjoyed the orange juice and milk on our side of the Iron Curtain, they dug the unused cartons out of the trash at the end of the flight.

Anne still has her 1968 Western flight attendant's uniform: a white blouse/

slip and a sky-blue polyester button-up jacket and short skirt combination. Girdles were required, and supervisors might pinch the flight attendants to be sure they were in compliance.

Anne loved her job, but left it to marry Don, a Navy Reservist based in Pensacola, Florida. Don was on active duty in the late 1960's. He went through primary flight training at Saufley and Whiting fields in Florida. Although he



Anne Griffin's Western Airlines uniform, circa 1962

# Donald Joseph Griffin 6/12/45—5/8/24



did not ultimately choose the Navy as his career, he considered his time in the service well spent.

Don worked at a department store in Huntington Beach, CA, and later began work at the Orange County Assessor's office. In 1981, he and Anne moved to Olympia, WA, where Don worked as a real estate appraiser at a private firm for eight years, then spent 18 more as an appraiser for Snohomish County while taking up residence in Mukilteo. After Don's retirement in 2010, the Griffins travelled through all 50 states via motor home and then settled down in Mount Vernon.

Their older daughter, Valerie, was born in Milton, FL and their younger daughter, Kristen, was born in Mission Viejo, CA. The Griffins faced extraordinary adversity together and found the strength to turn it into something constructive. They lost Kristen at age 25 in a tragic medical malpractice incident. Anne tirelessly investigated what had happened and pursued a settlement. The Griffins put a large share of it toward establishing a scholarship for nursing students at the

University of Washington.

Anne first visited HFM with her neighbor, a former Air Force flight nurse, and the Griffins began attending Fly Days. But long before walking through our doors, she had connected with the Apollo 8 story. She was on a layover in Great Falls when she heard the Christmas Eve broadcast from the astronauts in lunar orbit. It has an indelible place in her memory along with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Anne recently retired from many years of work as an enrolled agent preparing tax returns. She continues on the Volunteer Corps now that Don has passed and is supported in her grief by her museum colleagues.

Don's Celebration of Life was held here at HFM, and the staff wore Hawaiian shirts as a testament to Don's cheerful nature and taste in clothing. All of Don's famous Tommy Bahama shirts have been given to Mary Quehrn, the wife of HFM docent Bill Quehrn, who is making them into a quilt in honor of Don.

During the year Anne and Don were separated, she in flight attendant school and he in the Navy, they wrote 87 letters to each other. Don passed 56 years after that, so the calendar dates coincided exactly. Anne has begun reading the letters one by one, each on the 56th anniversary of the day it was written. It's a fitting way to remember a kind, positive and generous man.

We are all better for having known Don and glad to keep Anne with us as part of the HFM family.



Anne with Don as he commissions into the Navy

# Heroes in the Hangar

By Bill Quehrn

Three Vietnam War heroes visited Heritage Flight Museum in September and became the first to sign their names on the door of another war veteran, our UH-1 Iroquois “Huey” helicopter.

Dick Gerry was a Forward Air Control (FAC) pilot flying a Cessna O-1 Bird Dog during the war with over 530 missions to his credit. HFM’s collection includes a Bird Dog although it was not on the museum floor during their visit.

Robert Pryor, Army Special Forces Sergeant, received a Distinguished Service Cross for his heroic actions during a June 1969 Viet Cong attack on Camp Bunard, Republic of Vietnam, where he was serving as an intelligence specialist. His citation recounts his extraordinary actions that saved a number of American lives during the attack. He was severely wounded in the battle.

Gerry reports that he was flying FAC duty that day and was alerted to the attack at Camp Bunard. From his Bird Dog he directed air assets to the site to repel the enemy attackers.

The two men recently met for the first time at Gerry’s home in Bellingham some 55 years after their encounter in Vietnam.

Fred McCarthy served with the U.S. Army’s 121st Assault Helicopter Company at Soc Trang, as a warrant officer and helicopter pilot of slicks (Tigers) and Huey gunships. He totaled over 1300 hours in the air during the war and is the author of a book *Coming all The Way Home* that portrays what life was like in combat and after coming back.

HFM’s Huey has recently undergone a dramatic restoration. Docent Del Chasteen, a former Bell Helicopter Company supervisor, worked with a small, dedicated corps of volunteers to bring the battered and abused airship back to a presentable state. The chopper was acquired several years ago

from a scrap yard in Bellingham and sat for a long time on a pylon in front of the museum.

Volunteer Jay Borella, a US Marine Corps veteran with extensive military helicopter experience, took the lead in patching up the weary bird in preparation for a final paint job and service markings. Borella happened to be in the museum the day the trio visited and invited them to sign their names on one of the helicopter’s access panel doors.

Since then, the Huey, once again looking proud and strong, has returned to the pylon in front of the museum as a welcome to—and welcome home—for Vietnam veterans who visit HFM.



Dick Gerry, Fred McCarthy and Robert Pryor /Photos by Jay Borella

# Parts and Pieces



Last April, HFM hosted “Quilts Take Flight,” an exhibit organized by the Fidalgo Island Quilters. For three days, every spare inch of hangar space was draped in colorful calicos as throngs of quilt enthusiasts packed the museum. While all this was going on, it was our good fortune to be introduced to Denny Fox, Group Leader for a local chapter of Quilts of Valor (QOV).

We’ll get to the QOV in a minute, which is an amazing story in itself. But first we should take time to appreciate the serendipity that brought Denny to the museum. HFM owned a tail-rotorless UH-1 “Huey” in the midst of a restoration, while Denny Fox owned a Hueyless UH-1 tail rotor with nowhere to go but here. A fateful conjunction at the quilt show (what are the chances?) put the icing on our cake, and the empty aft-end of our bird now looks as it should.

You may well wonder how Denny happened to be harboring a stray tail rotor. She retired as a U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 5. She spent nine years on active duty, nine years in the Reserves and nine-and-a-half years in

the Minnesota National Guard. During that time, she served as a test pilot, maintenance technician, test pilot evaluator, instructor and safety officer. Hueys, Chinooks and Blackhawks are some of the rotorcraft she has piloted and maintained.

Denny served as a crew chief in Desert Storm and Desert Shield. At some point after her retirement from the military, she became one of more than 375,000 servicepeople to be awarded a “Quilt of Valor.” It was a touching experience that inspired her to join her local QOV chapter.

According to the organization’s website, A Quilt of Valor is a handmade quilt that is awarded to a service member or veteran who has been touched by war. The Quilt is a way to say, “Thank you for your service and sacrifice in serving our nation.”

QOV was founded in 2003 by a mother named Catherine Roberts whose son was deployed in Iraq. She organized a movement that has grown into more than 10,000 volunteers across 600 groups in all 50 States. The objective: to bring healing to service members and veterans and show gratitude in the form of a tangible comfort.



# HFM's "Aircraft Garden" is Growing...



HFM's static F-89 Scorpion was joined by the MiG 21 and the newly-restored UH-1B Huey, now on display in the Aircraft Garden out front.

# HFM Staff & Volunteers at the May Fly Day



Photos by HFM Volunteer Taylor Maxwell

# Thanks for Your Support



A big “shout out” goes to the following supporters from the local community and beyond, who have donated time, artifacts and/or expertise to benefit the museum:

Photography: **Karen Hicks, Deane Crilley, Taylor Maxwell, Aviation PhotoCrew**

Summer-Fall Collections Interns: **Sydney Durst, Liam Cartwright**

Fly Day Support: **Corporate Air, Concorde Batteries**

UH-1 Restoration: **Fred C Smyth, Del Chasteen, Mark Carpenter, Jay Borella, William Borella, Mark Shayne, John Wahlig, Scott Lindberg, CryoMode, Denny Fox**

Fly Day Pilots: **Craig Nelson, Joe Fisher, Matt Groth**

Artifact Loan or Donation: **Anne Griffin, Jay Borella, Janet Loehn, Richard Bourcier, Randy Kaufman, James Jansky, Eileen Andersen, Joe Handler, Stan Hair, William Stein, Robert Stabodnik, Ron Walden, Sherry Biles Greene, Kenneth Bishop, Jr., Leonard Warden, Harry Ferrier, Jr., Delbert Chasteen, Daniel Cuccia**

Exhibits: **Bob Craddock, Christopher Browne, Jennifer Levasseur, The National Air & Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution**

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# Welcome to the Attic

## This Watch Flew to the Moon!

By Sarah Spencer

Have you ever considered asking for the time...from an astronaut in space? HFM has acquired, after a years-long preparatory process, a new time-telling artifact in the Earthrise Gallery that has a particular significance for the Anders family. An Omega Speedmaster Professional Chronograph worn by Bill Anders during the Apollo 8 space mission is on permanent loan from the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. It now sits on display in the vault inside the Earthrise Gallery.

Every astronaut who took part in the Apollo Space Program was given a manual-winding wrist chronograph to be worn on their mission. Chosen for its high level of precision and reliability, the Omega Speedmaster Chronograph went through rigorous testing to establish its waterproof, shock-proof, anti-magnetic, and temperature withstanding ability.

The chronograph case is made of polished and brushed stainless steel, while the lens is made of hesalite, a synthetic crystal that gives it an added touch of sleekness. Its original rubber gasket was replaced by OMEGA in 2015.

Not only is this chronograph a remarkable timepiece, but it also had a bigger meaning for Bill Anders. Upon reflection with NASM curator Jennifer Levasseur, Anders described the personal significance of the



chronograph as a family heirloom. The chronograph reminded Bill of his father, Arthur Anders, who was a Naval officer and would have used a similar timekeeping device for ship navigation.

The chronograph is truly a spectacular piece of history and to see it in person for the first time puts into perspective just how special this chronograph was, not only to the late founder of this museum, but to all who were involved during a time of dangerous yet intrepid space exploration.



Photo courtesy of National Air & Space Museum

HFM owes a big thank you to Bob Craddock for transporting the chronograph and installing it into the exhibit. Bill Anders' signature on the reverse side commemorates the successful Apollo 8 mission, which no doubt owed a small share of its success to the contribution of this timepiece.

# Introducing Ol' Number 4



Photo by Taylor Maxwell

In the summer of 2020, while the Covid pandemic was upending our usual routine, HFM artifact scavenger and restoration genius Ralph Peterson headed over the mountains to look at a 1940s Ford Moto Tug not far from the Chelan Airport. He purchased it on our behalf and spent several years restoring the tug up in Bellingham. Thanks Ralph, you've done it again!

The meticulously-restored tug, christened Ol' Number 4, first emerged into the light of day and the appreciation of the public at our May Fly Day, the only Fly Day HFM was able to produce in 2024 due to a string of singularly unfortunate events. From runway closure to tragic accident, it

was a rough year. At such times, a little bit of sunshine goes a long way.

Our "new" tug resembles a vintage 9N tractor, also made by Ford and with many of the same parts. With its jaunty stripes and distinctive grille, it took a proud place at the head of our May parade driven by Executive Director Greg Anders.

Yes, there is a story behind the name. "Ol' Number 4" commemorates HFM Founder Bill Anders' tendency to refer to his children by number when he could not immediately call up their names. Greg, the fourth child of six, celebrated this quirk with a humorous designation for our glowing yellow machine.



# New to the Crew

Heritage Flight Museum welcomes our new AMT: Willie Robinet from Phoenix, AZ (on the right) fills the A & P/IA slot and brings along his sidekick, a Navy-built N3N. His Stearman-like biplane is one of the aircraft our late founder Bill Anders trained in at the US Naval Academy, and Willie's dad also flew it as he croppdusted his way through college in the 1950's. Willie began his life of aviation with a pilot's license at age 17. His first job out of A & P school was working on helicopters for Temsco in Alaska. Then he signed on at Cirrus Aircraft Factory and worked all around the country, eventually landing in Moab, UT as Director of Maintenance for Redtail Air. Willie joins the HFM staff to replace Grace Stephens, who is now maintaining Mustangs for the legendary Hinton family (founders of Planes of Fame Air Museum).

On the left is Joseph Mora, a graduate of Spartan College of Aeronautics in Tulsa, OK, who assisted with maintenance at HFM during the summer and fall. Joseph arrived just in time for the annual Raiderwash event and we enjoyed having him with us.



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