
Friend Leroy Skinner (1925 - 2012)



Friend Leroy Skinner was born on February 17, 1925 in Highland Park (Detroit), Michigan, the only child of Leo Arthur and Mary Louise (Huntly) Skinner. He was survived by his wife of 62 years, Pauline (Polly) Hagan Skinner.

He graduated from Cass Tech High School in Detroit in the late 1940s and then from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1950. He worked in Eniwetok in the South Pacific during the early 1950s, developing and testing nuclear devices and traveled extensively during his long engineering career. A lifelong Electrical Engineer, he worked for the Sandia Corporation in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Livermore, California in the 1950s and 1960s and then relocated to the East Coast in the late 1960s and worked for the MITRE Corporation in Bedford, Massachusetts and McLean, Virginia.

After his retirement from MITRE in the early 1980s, he worked as a communications/network systems consultant at the Pentagon and White House, helping develop some of the first computer communication networks in the United States (in effect, pioneering further development of the Internet).

He was a Life Member of the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers). Friend served as the WNCIEEE Section vice chair in 2000 and section chair in 2001. After he served as an officer of the section he continued to be very active in section functions and assisted in organizing many of our technical presentation meetings and several awards banquets.

After his retirement, he was an active member of SCORE (Society of Retired Executives) and the Asheville area PC users group (whose members will truly miss his knowledge of computers and sense of humor).

Friend was an avid gardener and arborist - he definitely had a green thumb and he thoroughly enjoyed spending hours creating and maintaining beautifully landscaped yards at every one of the homes where he and Polly lived. Their home on High View Drive in Black Mountain was surrounded by a magnificent display of nature and gardens full of hundreds of varieties of day lilies, azaleas, dogwood trees, and many other plants.

Concurrent with his and Polly's move to the West in the early 1950s, Friend extended his enjoyment of traveling, travel trailering, slide photography, and camping, taking his growing family on numerous vacations and trips to many areas around the United States, visiting almost every state in the USA and many of our National Parks.