

Captain Rosemary Bryant Mariner of Norris, Tennessee | 1953 - 2019 | Obituary



Captain Rosemary Bryant Mariner

April 02, 1953 - January 24, 2019

Captain Rosemary Mariner, United States Navy, Retired, died on January 24, 2019, in the fifth year of her battle with ovarian cancer, with her husband and wingman of 40 years by her side. She was 65. Born in Harlingen, Texas, raised in San Diego, she graduated from Purdue University with a degree in aeronautics at 19. Captain Mariner was one of the first eight women selected to fly military aircraft in 1973. After flight training in 1974, she became the Navy's first female jet pilot flying the A-4C and the A-7E Corsair II. She moved to the Naval Weapons Center in China Lake, then Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 5. For sea duty, in 1982 she reported aboard USS Lexington, where she qualified as a Surface Warfare Officer.

In 1990, she became the first woman to command a military aviation squadron, VAQ-34, based at the Pacific Missile Test Center at Pt. Mugu, CA. She attended the National War College in Washington, DC, earning a Masters in National Security Strategy, and served on the Staff of the Joint Chiefs in the Pentagon. Her final military assignment was as the Chairman of the Joint Chief's Chair in Military Strategy at the National War College, before retiring in 1997. Throughout her career, Captain Mariner was both willing to serve as a mentor to others and deeply grateful to the men and women who enabled her to pursue her dreams. She was instrumental in the repeal of restrictions on women serving in combat.

In retirement, Captain Mariner was a resident scholar at the Center for the Study of War and Society at the University of Tennessee in the History Department where she taught classes in military history, emphasizing the intersections of war and conscience. She continued to serve as an advisor on national defense policy and women's integration into the military for ABC News, PBS and the Department of the Navy. A voracious reader and an eager academic, she

devoted herself to a love of knowledge. In recent years, this included the disease which took her life, which she sought to understand as fully as possible. As expected, she tenaciously fought an implacable foe to the end. She lived in Norris, Tennessee, with her husband, retired Navy Commander Tommy Mariner, and their daughter, Emmalee, who attends Duke University.

The family will receive friends from 10:00 to 11:00 AM, on Saturday, February 2, 2019, at Norris United Methodist Church, with a funeral to follow at 11:00 AM. Funeral mass will be at 1:00 PM at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, with full military graveside service to follow at New Loyston Cemetery. Holley-Gamble Funeral Home in Clinton is in charge of all arrangements. In lieu of flowers, the family will accept donations to Sacred Ground Residential Hospice.