

## Ron Schlagheck



On July 6, 2020, Ronald Alan Schlagheck, age 74, leapt up the stairs to heaven.

Good enough for government work did not have the same meaning for him as it does for the rest of us. From squaring and leveling a single paver to overseeing microgravity research projects for the space station, everything had to be perfect, and he accepted nothing less.

Ron was born in Ohio, and a few years later, his family moved to Miami. A very driven child with an aptitude for mechanics, Ron started his lawn care business as an adolescent. Maintaining his small fleet of lawn equipment and installing an irrigation system for his parents, he saved every penny. In his early years, he became fascinated with this new organization called NASA. In high school, he won first place in a science fair with a project about aerodynamics, which earned him a scholarship to a local college. Two years later, he continued his education at the University of Florida, accompanied by his high school sweetheart and wife Cecelia. After graduating with bachelor's and master's degrees in aerospace engineering, they moved to Huntsville where he started working for NASA at the Marshall Space Flight Center. From Saturn V to Skylab to Spacelab, Hubble, Mir, and the space station, he insured the success of the most important NASA projects. During their years in Huntsville, they raised a son Paul and two daughters Dawn and Robyn. Ron's drive, motivation, and pursuit of excellence spilled over to his personal interests as well. He was actively involved with the Rocket City Gator Club (RCGC,) building committee of Good Shepherd Catholic Church (Huntsville, AL,) and coaching his kids' sports teams and clubs.

After he retired from NASA, he and Cecelia built a home on Tims Ford lake in Winchester, TN. He stayed busy working on and lobbying with the Tennessee AARP executive council, serving on the Arnold [Air Force Base] Community Council, assisting with a local middle school's robotics team, delivering Meals on Wheels, continuing as an officer with RCGC, mentoring college students in the Cubesat competition, bringing the portable Spacedome to his granddaughter's elementary school, and fundraising for his church. As an active member of AIAA, he visited Congress representatives to promote the continuation of aerospace research, and he also took aerospace engineering students to Congress to discuss their role in the future of aerospace engineering. He enjoyed college sports, sports talk radio, boating, grilling, spending time with friends and family, working in the yard, and traveling with Cecelia domestically and abroad. Chatty and personable, there was no such thing as a quick trip to the store or a short story/conversation. He made friends easily and touched the life of every person he met. One of his co-workers once summarized his secret of success: it was not how much Ron knew, it was his ability to bring people together for common purpose. He will be missed beyond measure.

He is survived by his best friend and wife of 55 years, Cecelia; sister Gay Heien and spouse Steven Heien; son, Paul Schlagheck and spouse Debra Schlagheck; daughter, Dawn Jones and spouse Bryan Jones; daughter, Robyn Schlagheck; grandchildren Lizanne Johnson and spouse JP Johnson, Joseph Varner, Julia Varner, Megan Jones, and Allison Jones; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

There will be a funeral Mass for Ron on Thursday, July 16th, at 10:30 am at Good Shepherd. At some point in the future, when coronavirus is not such an issue, the family plans a Celebration of Life with a reception.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the American Heart Association or the Franklin County Tennessee chapter of Meals on Wheels.

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