



James D. Cuzzolina, Jr.

July 20, 1924 - July 4, 2017

Jim departed this life on Independence Day at the age of 92. He was a very gregarious and loving man who was dedicated to family and friends. As a devout patriot with a deep love of his country, he chose a very appropriate day to leave us.

Also known as “Cuzz” or “Pop Pop,” Jim began his journey in Altoona, Pennsylvania where he attended Altoona High School. He then began college at Penn State University and joined Phi Delta Theta fraternity before leaving college after his freshman year to serve in the U.S. Army Air Corp in December of 1942. He became an officer and first pilot on a B24 liberator airplane during WWII, completing twelve missions with the 98th Bomb Squadron in the Pacific Theater.

After separating from active duty, he returned to Altoona, where he met and wed Gloria Saleme in 1948. Jim finished his BA and MA at Penn State in Aeronautical Engineering and relocated his family to California to begin a career in aerospace with Douglas Aircraft. His career would take him in many directions, including performing quality checks on the Apollo spacecraft before it reached moon in 1969, and managing design on commercial aircrafts including the DC10 and MD11. He traveled to various international locations on business and pleasure, and spent spare time teaching aerospace education and business math at Harbor College.

Always the patriot, Jim joined the U.S. Air Force reserves, retiring in 1984 with the rank of Colonel. Since the mid-1990's, he was actively involved in his 11th Bomb Group. He attended annual reunions all over the country, including those held in Honolulu, to commemorate the bombing of Pearl Harbor as well as those lost at Hickham AFB. In remembrance and honor, till the day he passed, he was never without an American flag pin on his lapel.

Jim always loved sports: Running track at Altoona High, playing freshman football in college and playing pick-up ice hockey. He was an avid fan attending many of the Penn State University football home games with friends and fraternity brothers. He was a season ticket holder for the LA Rams during their stay in Anaheim, the Anaheim Angels since 1975, the Anaheim Ducks since their inception in 1993, and Santa Ana Dons football, where his grandson, Geoff, coaches. His family will fondly remember when he threw out the first pitch to a standing ovation at Anaheim Stadium to honor the WWII heroes, as well as his article in the Ducks brochure where they referred to him as, “Gentleman Jim.”

He's now joined his parents Edna and James Cuzzolina, his sister Mary “Iggy” White and his beloved wife Gloria, who passed away in 1995. Jim and Gloria will be interred together at Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, California.

Jim is survived by his sisters, Virginia Costlow and Edna Marinella; his children, Nan Cuzzolina Cruce, James John Cuzzolina and Jan Noel Cuzzolina; five grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, and family and friends across the country.

Jim was always a kind, out-going and generous man. He never met a stranger he didn't turn into a friend, always had a big smile on his face, and a great story to tell. He was loved by many, and we will miss him.

