

Donald "Donnie" Fred Heckert was born on September 28, 1935, on a farm in Cottonwood County, Minnesota, the son of Henry and Violet (Elg) Heckert. He grew up in Comfrey and graduated from Comfrey High School in 1953. Following graduation, Donnie enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and served in the Korean War and Vietnam conflict. On February 9, 1957, Donnie was married to Mary Jane Rickman in Bremerhaven, Germany (Mary Jane was in the U.S. Army). He was honorably discharged in 1975 after 22 years of service at the rank of Senior Master Sergeant and was awarded several medals of commendation.

After retirement, they lived in Lebanon, Oregon where Donnie attended the University of Oregon and earned a degree in accounting. They later moved to Kingman, Arizona and from 1998 to 2023, lived in Tucson, Arizona. In July of 2023, Donnie moved to Minnesota due to health reasons.

He was a life member of the V.F.W. Post and the Elks Lodge. Donnie volunteered at numerous events at the Elks Lodge and visited vets at the V.A. Hospital. He also served as a camp host at Ainsworth State Park in Oregon.

Donnie enjoyed woodworking, playing cribbage, trips to the Las Vegas Casinos to play poker and riding his Harley motorcycle. He rode many miles from coast to coast. Donnie was adventurous and enjoyed life. He had a great smile and sense of humor. He was very knowledgeable of the countries and states in which he lived and traveled.

He is survived by one sister, Jeannette (and Bob) Carlson of Willmar and one sister-in-law, Donna Heckert of Alexandria. Also surviving are several nieces and nephews, Robin (and John) Bratvold and family of Mason City, Iowa, Julie Paquette and family of Faribault, Jim (and Ann) Heckert of Faribault, Scott Heckert and family of Alexandria, Jodi Elness and family of Brainerd, Deb (and Christian) DeVries and family of Peoria, Arizona, Nicole Pulsifer and family of Spicer, Bill (and Lori) Carlson and family of New London and Kristin (and Nick) Dalton and family of New London.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Mary Jane in 2010; two brothers, Alquin in 2019 and Jerry in 2016; and a sister-in-law, Joje in 2012.



# *Celebrating the Life of*



## *Donnie Heckert*

*1935 - 2024*

# High Flight

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sun-split clouds, — and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air . . .  
  
Up, up the long, delirious burning blue  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace  
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew —  
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.*

*-John Gillespie Magee, Jr.*

In Loving Memory Of

## Donnie Heckert

September 28, 1935  
Cottonwood County, Minnesota

July 26, 2024  
Willmar, Minnesota

### Celebration of Life Service

Saturday, August 17, 2024 - 11:00 a.m.  
Peterson Brothers Funeral Home  
Willmar, Minnesota

Opening Song "How Great Thou Art" Stephanie Hendrickson—Violinist  
Welcome and Opening Prayer  
Song "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" Simon & Garfunkel (cd)  
Reading of the Obituary  
Time of Remembrance  
Song "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" Elvis Presley (cd)  
Scripture Readings  
Meditation Pastor Dean E. Johnson  
Song "You'll Never Walk Alone" Elvis Presley (cd)  
Closing Prayers  
Closing Song "Amazing Grace" Stephanie Hendrickson—Violist  
Presentation of the Colors—Outside American Legion Post #167

### Urnbearers

Robin Bratvold Julie Paquette Jim Heckert Scott Heckert  
Jodi Elness Deb DeVries Nicole Pulsifer  
Bill Carlson Kristin Dalton

### Interment

Friday, October 25, 2024  
East Palms Cemetery  
Tucson, Arizona