

Byron Beal was a military cadet, collegiate athlete, military pilot, Persian Gulf War veteran and recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Beal graduated from Plainville High School as the valedictorian of the class of 1969. He was a member of the National Honor Society, band, choir, two-time all league tackle for the Cardinals football team and president of Methodist Youth Fellowship.

Beal received an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs where he studied Astronautical Engineering. While attending the Air Force Academy, Beal played defensive tackle for the nationally ranked Falcons football team.

In 1973, Beal married PHS classmate Margena Keas daughter of Buck and Genette Keas.

Obituary from the Washing Post, 10 August 1998

BYRON BEAL, RETIRED AIR FORCE PILOT, DIES AT 47

Byron Beal, 47, a pilot who served in the Air Force for 22 years before retiring in 1995 as a lieutenant colonel, died of leukemia Aug. 7 at Inova Fairfax Hospital. He had lived in Clifton (VA) for the past five years.

Col. Beal, an aerospace engineer, had worked since 1995 for the Space Applications Corp. in Vienna, where he was a senior member of the technical staff.

During his years with the Air Force, he became a command pilot with more than 2,400 hours of flying time.

This included 165 hours of combat time in the Persian Gulf War, in which he flew the F-4G "Wild Weasel" fighter.

Col. Beal's last assignment before his retirement from active duty was in the Pentagon, where he was a division chief in the fighter weapons directorate dealing with acquisitions.

Col. Beal's decorations included the Distinguished Flying Cross.

He served as a deacon and small group leader of the Centreville Baptist Church and also led home Bible study groups.

He belonged to church choirs on Air Force bases around the world where he had been stationed. He also was active in the Promise Keepers group and had been a volunteer basketball coach.

Col. Beal, who was born in Hays, Kan., was a 1973 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy.

He received a master's degree in aeronautical engineering from the University of Texas.

Survivors include his wife of 25 years, Margena, and two children, Jessica and Joshua, all of Clifton; and a sister, Dr. Deanna Fox of Lenexa, KS.