David Warren Lutz

Henry David Thoreau wrote: "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears…"

Dave Lutz was his own drummer and heard music no one else could. Independent and utterly unaffected by the opinions of others or popular trends, Dave was his own man.

Dave Lutz was born in Sioux Falls, SD on June 30, 1950, and graduated from Sioux Falls Lincoln High School in June 1968.

All of us who knew Dave, especially his roommates, remember his distinctive approach to life and unrelenting determination. Here are a few anecdotes illustrating Dave's individuality.
- Dave was determined to go to USAFA, so following high school, he spent a year at Millard Prep School in Bandon, OR, to improve his chances. His hard work paid off and Dave joined the "Illustrious Class of 1973" on 23 June 1969.
- While everyone had a difficult doolie year, Dave's was more difficult. He seemed to attract unwanted notice from upperclassman. But Dave was always remarkably unfazed by all the "attention."
- When the Supreme Court ended compulsory Chapel Attendance in 1972, we all celebrated this newfound freedom to "sleep in" on Sunday mornings. Not Dave. He continued to attend Catholic Mass at the Chapel every Sunday and became president of Catholic Cadets.
- When at last in 1972 our class was able to own cars, most of us wanted sports cars. Not Dave. He purchased a blue Volvo station wagon, proudly extolling its "quality, safety features, and cargo carrying capacity."
- Dave's most unique path followed graduation when he "branch transferred" to the US Marine Corps. Like many of us, Dave dreamed of flying fighter aircraft. However, in the early 70s USAF had too many fighter pilots. New pilot training graduates rarely earned a fighter. When Dave discovered USMC pilots only flew fighters, he made an incredible decision that radically changed his future. At our June 1973 commissioning ceremony, USMC 2nd Lieutenant Dave Lutz stood in his Marine finery, along with his 11 original CS-33 Classmates. So, while the rest of us enjoyed extended leave following graduation, Dave spent a very long hot summer at a USMC Officer Basic – one of the toughest decisions his classmates could imagine. Dave's determination paid off! He earned his wings and flew F-4s for the Marines!

Dave always enjoyed life. After leaving the Marines, he joined Delta Airlines, became a senior pilot flying international flights, and had lots of vacation time. Every summer he would buy new Honda Gold Wing motorcycle, tour the country, sell the Gold Wing, and resume flying for Delta.

Dave was a good, kind man. He once took his young nephews on a pirate treasure hunt at a mangrove island near his home in Cape Coral, FL, where he had seeded the beach with foreign coins from his international flights. Later, he and another Delta pilot took a long motorcycle trip into the Mexican Interior to meet a family he had sponsored through his church. Finally, he foster-parented a son, Kenny Kemple, and was immensely proud that Kenny's first child was named David.

Dave died on February 4, 1998 at age 47 in Atlanta after a five-year bout with cancer.

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