



Kenneth Lewis Gebhart of Wichita, Kansas was born 29 October 1935 in Montclair, N.J. and passed away on 29 April 2021. Many will remember him as a long-time sailboat show exhibitor of sextants, and presenter of seminars on celestial navigation. The Company he founded in 1972, Celestaire, Inc. rose to become the largest distributor of marine sextants and related publications in the world.

A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy in 1958 he went on to earn a Master's Degree in Physics from the University of Louisville.

Ken's passion for celestial navigation began from his time as a Naval Aviator P2V patrol Plane Commander with VP-6 in Hawaii. While in the Navy Reserve, he qualified as a Navy Helicopter pilot in Pensacola.

He then took a job with Boeing Military Company in Wichita as a test pilot. His career was interrupted by a reserve call-up for the Pueblo crisis in 1967, during which he served as a USAF pilot.

He graduated from The Naval Test Pilot School as a civilian contractor test pilot in 1975 with an Instructor Pilot designation in the T-38. Ken became a QB in the ICT Hanger in 1969.

In 1980, he was promoted to Chief of Flight Operations, and Chief Pilot at Boeing. During the next ten years Ken qualified as a Flight Crew Training pilot at Seattle. He obtained his FAA Flight Navigator Certificate to assist in oceanic delivery of B-737 and 727 airplanes in the years before GPS. As his last project, he flew initial envelope expansion of the Sky Fox airplane which did make it to production.

Meanwhile Celestaire, Inc., a company selling celestial navigation equipment and to promote, and test his theories, he made several flights across both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans in single engine Cessnas, using the only available navigation system at that time – celestial.

In 1990 Ken took early retirement from Boeing at age 55 to devote full time to running his company.

Ken had a full and varied life, and in later years he enjoyed international travel to meet with his many worldwide dealers.

Preceded in death by his parents, Thomas, and Elise Gebhart, first wife, Mary Lee Gebhart, son Douglas Gebhart, great-grandchild, Gracelyn Stimson.

Survived by his wife, Eileen Kludt, sons, Kenneth L. (Amy) Gebhart, Jr., both of Wichita, KS, Thomas E. (Susan) Gebhart of Los Angeles, CA, Eric L. Gebhart of San Antonio, TX; daughters Mary E. (Randall) Relph of Wichita, KS, Kimberly E. (Brian) Jones of Metuchen, NJ; Eileen's loving children, Heather M. (Warren) Schwanz of Andover, KS, David T. (Nicole) Kludt of Austin, TX, Amanda K. (Erick) Anderson of League City, TX; 24 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.