

# A Family's Tribute

**Daniel M. Tellep**, retired Chairman and CEO of the Lockheed Martin Corporation, and longtime resident of Saratoga, CA, passed away peacefully at home with family and loved ones at his side on November 26th, 2020. He was 89. Born in 1931 to immigrant parents in Forest City, PA, a small coal mining and silk manufacturing town, his family later relocated to San Diego, CA during the Great Depression. Dan came from humble beginnings and attributed his fulfillment and success in life to his parents, Mary and John, who instilled in him a devotion to family, an ethic of hard work, the value of education and the importance of kindness to others.



Daniel M. Tellep

## THE BOY AVIATOR

Dan was enamored with the concept of flight early on as a young boy. It began when his cousin Lillian gave him his first model airplane kit in the late 1930's. In his family memoir he wrote about the special airplane gift.



Michael Tellep (brother) and Dan Tellep (Age 9)

As teenagers, his winsome younger brother Michael took to the Pacific Ocean surfing on a longboard, while Dan took to the skies above with his towline glider.

*"One day, the on-shore breezes disappeared, and I forgot to set the rudder of the glider so that it would circle upon release. The result was that my precious glider didn't circle and drift back over land but headed straight out to sea, slowly descended and landed in calm water beyond the surf. It floated beautifully, but I was crestfallen imagining that eventually it would be crushed in the surf. I then had an idea. My brother, Mike, had a paddleboard at home, and with it, perhaps, I could paddle through the surf and retrieve my precious glider. Within an hour I was beyond the surf on the paddleboard and able to bring the glider aboard. Since I needed both arms to paddle, I held the horizontal tail of the glider between my teeth and headed toward the surf, waiting for a relatively calm period. The rescue was successful, and other than a few dental impressions on the tail, the glider went on to dozens of additional flights."*

The last flight of his glider was especially memorable.

*"On a hot summer day, I launched the glider, and it seemed to circle forever, barely descending. This was when I learned about "thermals". Basically, the hot ground heats the surface air, which rises to significant altitudes. This rising column of air carries with it all things light—and this included my glider. I watched in disbelief as my glider flew in lazy circles to ever-greater heights, becoming smaller and smaller and drifting away until it was a speck in the sky. It was the last time I ever saw the glider. Since I didn't put my name on it, there was no way it could be returned. Now, so many years later, it is with me in a different way."*

## EDUCATION AND CAREER

Dan attended the University of California at Berkeley graduating magna cum laude with a degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1954 and then earned his Master of Science degree the following year. He credited his professors at Berkeley for a transformative opening of his mind to the "elegance of mathematics and equations". Then in 1971, he completed advanced management studies at Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration.



*Dan (right) at UC Berkeley with Marge Lewis*



Dan's remarkable 43-year career in the aerospace industry began in 1955 when he joined the ranks of the newly formed Lockheed Missiles and Space Company as a principal scientist and 200th employee in an abandoned hangar in Van Nuys, CA, working on re-entry technology. The company later moved to Sunnyvale, and in 1957 the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, provoking an aerospace competition with the United States. The Cold War was underway, and the space race fueled a wave of technological innovation and explosive growth in the industry. Ultimately, Lockheed Missiles and Space Company grew to 30,000 employees and Dan was named president in 1984. Then in 1989, he was selected to lead Lockheed Corporation as CEO and Chairman.

Following the collapse of communism and shrinking defense budgets, Dan phoned his friend and competitor Norm Augustine (CEO Martin Marietta) and proposed a merger between Lockheed Corporation and Martin Marietta resulting in the formation of Lockheed Martin Corporation in 1995 -- the world's largest aerospace company with annual sales of \$35 billion dollars. In the early and secretive days of planning the merger, Dan used the phrase "One Company from Day One" to underscore the importance of unity in shaping decisions in the formation of the new company. Known as the "[Merger of Equals](#)", Lockheed Martin began trading on the New York Stock Exchange in March 1995. Dan became Lockheed Martin's first Chairman and CEO in 1995. He served as CEO for nine months, then remained as Chairman until 1998.



*Norm Augustine & Dan Tellep*

When reflecting on his career, he reveled in the camaraderie and respectful collegiality of his fellow men and women scientists, staying in touch with many of them throughout life. He loved the challenge of finding creative solutions with his teams. Former colleagues often remark upon on his deep technological knowledge, combined with excellent managerial skills and the courage to ask penetrating questions to get to the heart of a situation. As a manager and executive, he was known for his handwritten notes of acknowledgment and gratitude to employees, as well as his initiation of the morale building annual "Beat the Boss" run.



*Sperry Space Award, 1964 (Age 32)*

Though honored with many awards for aerospace engineering, management and manufacturing throughout his career, he cherished most the Lawrence B. Sperry Award from the American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics conferred to a promising young engineer. He was 32 at the time. The award recognized his contributions to re-entry technology and thermodynamics in aerospace programs. Ever humble, his accrued awards and honors were never hung on walls in his home, instead tucked away at the back of closets. His legacy as a scientist and scholar continues through the University of California Berkeley Daniel M. Tellep Distinguished Professorship in Engineering endowment fund.

## THE PILOT

Outside of work, Dan was an accomplished pilot who loved to fly sailplanes above the slopes of the High Sierras and Colorado Rockies. His logbooks record over 600 hours of soaring and more than 4,500 miles of cross-country flight. He loved the thrill and challenge of finding thermals to stay aloft and especially of flying out of distance of the home airport. In October 1975, with his arm in a cast due to a bicycle accident, he fulfilled his dream of riding "the Wave" above Pikes Peak, Colorado ascending by himself to 31,000 feet.



*In search of thermals, 1980*

Years later, writing about the thrill of flying in an F-16 Fighting Falcon with a Lockheed test pilot (Dan was 62 at the time), he reflects:

*"The flight was marvelously exciting. I had a deep sense of a major life transition. Now, flying home aboard (a commercial flight) I felt a bit wistful, knowing that I would never again have such an experience. It was not just the flight I thought of, but also the connection with the good-willed souls who made the adventure possible. My first balsa-wood model airplane also came to mind, and I wondered if the origins of the F-16 flight weren't established when I was 9 years old."*



*Pre-flight walk with test pilot*



*Ready to pull some G's*



*Post-flight delight*

## THE ARTIST & WRITER



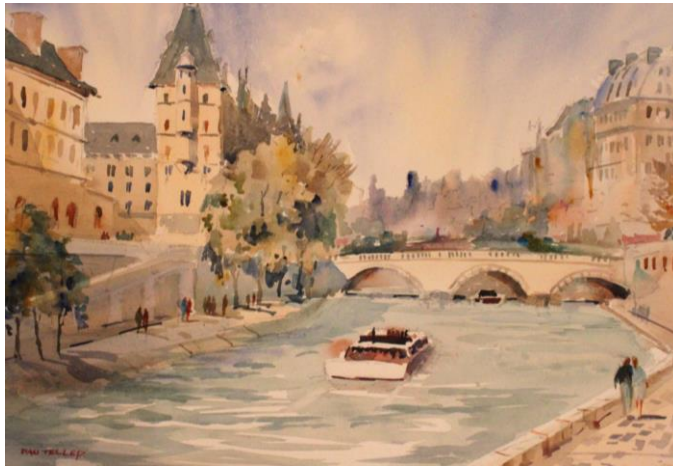
*En Plein Air, Yosemite*

Family, friends and colleagues often described him as a true Renaissance man for his ingenuity, creativity, and thirst for knowledge as both scientist and artist. In addition to his achievements as an engineer and pilot, he was an accomplished watercolorist, known for his luminous and transparent plein air paintings. Combining his love of nature, solitude, and travel experiences, watercolor painting brought him immense joy.

For Dan, painting was a meditative pursuit in which he reflected upon the beauty in nature and diversity of people and cities around the world. His paintings capture favorite memories of hikes in Big Sur, Yosemite, the Sierras, as well as many scenes of Paris, Provence, Venice, and Morocco. His work was accepted in prominent national watercolor exhibitions, and in 2001 a collection of his art was displayed at the Forbes Magazine Galleries in Manhattan.



*'El Capitan', Yosemite*



*'La Seine', Paris*



*'Two Men', Morocco*

As a writer, his penchant for reflection is found in writings and musings both typed and handwritten over the arc of his life describing a multitude of family and career experiences, travels and universal themes. His personalized and thoughtful birthday notes are treasured and kept in special places by his family and grandchildren.

He loved to read and stayed abreast of aviation and world events, sitting in his favorite light blue chair in his living room, the inner artist often glancing up to appreciate the changing light patterns coming through the windows on a late afternoon. He was known to recite a favorite poem committed to memory to family members or friends as the occasion called. Dan appreciated the beauty of music, whether found in Cistercian chants, or the works of Vince Guaraldi, Puccini or Beethoven. He looked forward to attending the annual Carmel Bach Festival with friends as well as the Smuin Ballet. As a philanthropist he supported many causes, including environmental conservation, the arts, aviation history and human service charities.

## THE RUNNER

Dan was an avid runner for over 40 years of his life. Though he enjoyed the palpable camaraderie of fellow runners after a race, it was the evanescent quality of calmness, and a runner's high that he savored after a run through his neighborhood or along the seashore. He competed in San Francisco's Bay to Breakers race when younger, as well the Great Race between Saratoga and Los Gatos in his 70's and 80's, finishing first in his age group seven out of eight times. He joked that he came in first place at age 81, being the only member of his age group. He enjoyed playing tennis for decades, as well as hiking in Big Sur, Point Lobos, Yosemite, the Sierras and Grand Tetons.

## FAMILY & FRIENDS

His family will miss his unique talent for function and elegance in design — whether embodied in a hand-built painter's easel, an organizational project for his workshop/studio, a children's playhouse, backyard garden landscape or medieval sandcastle built with his grandchildren at Carmel River Beach. Dan's daughters and their neighborhood friends from the Sixties will especially miss his homemade rockets and fireworks on the Fourth of July, Blue Angel airshows at Moffet Field, and weekend outings to the neighborhood school fields chasing after his occasionally wayward radio-controlled model airplanes.

Dan was deeply loved and admired. His family cherishes his love, his brilliance of mind and spirit, his integrity and generosity of heart, his curiosity and thirst for knowledge, his marvelous storytelling and quick wit, his humility and self-deprecating humor, his gentle wisdom and passion for adventure, his love of flight and physical exercise, his appreciation for the restorative nature of solitude and the great outdoors, and his joy and delight in moments of family togetherness. He instilled in his daughters and grandchildren a devotion to family, the quest for knowledge and beauty in the natural world and in others, and the importance of taking risks to follow one's dreams and find joy in creative pursuits. They are grateful for sharing simple and meaningful times, whether camping as a young family in the mountains, or hiking and picnicking along the breathtakingly beautiful shores of Point Lobos for over fifty years.

His final words of love to his daughters and family were to "live beautifully". Dan passed away peacefully early Thanksgiving morning. Ever the pilot, it was a very soft landing. And true to form, it was more of a "touch and go" as he took off one more time to catch the ultimate thermal.

His family now envisions him soaring high amid the clouds, running freely, and hiking the trails of Point Lobos scoping out the landscape for his next watercolor.



*Dan and his mother Mary Tellep*

He is survived by his four daughters, Teresa Tellep, Mary Tellep, Susan Tellep (Cindy) and Patricia Axelrod (Mark); his first wife, Margaret Lewis; two stepdaughters from his second marriage, Chris Chatwell (May) and Anne Bossange (Kent); grandchildren Vanessa Daniele, Rachel Nichting (Mark), Benjamin Axelrod (Torey), Samantha Gordon (Casey), Nathan Axelrod, Lynn Bossange (Lou) and Kate Macias (David); great-grandchildren Taylor, Reed, Katherine Grace, Evelyn and Sonny; and longtime family friend and devoted caregiver, Martha Chacon and family. He is predeceased by his parents Mary and John Tellep, brother Michael, and second wife Patricia Taylor Baumgardner.



*Lockheed Missiles & Space Company, 1988, Beat the Boss Run*

Private family services to be held in the future. Memorial donations may be made to Big Sur Land Trust, Point Lobos Foundation, the Carmelite Monastery of Carmel, Second Harvest Food Bank, Berkeley School of Engineering or a charity of one's choice.

*P.S. While writing this tribute, his daughters intercepted his January 2021 issue of Model Airplane News which highlights a Wish List for 30+ Must-Have Planes & Gear, as well as a free plans guide to Build your Dream Plane.*