



## Erik L. Ballinger

November 26, 1962 - December 26, 2019

Erik Louis “Balls” Ballinger, 57, of Leesburg, Virginia passed away from complications of cancer Thursday, December 26, 2019, at home with his family in Leesburg, Virginia. He was the husband of Christina Ballinger, and they shared 30 years of marriage together.

Born November 26, 1962 in Los Angeles, California, he was the son of the late Richard Ballinger and the late Jewell Gramig Ballinger. He received a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from the University of California – Los Angeles in 1987. He then pursued what had always been his dream, flying EA6B Prowlers and F/A 18 Hornets in the United States Navy. In his 10 years of service, he was awarded numerous medals and commendations, with over 300 aircraft carrier landings. After flying for United Airlines, and working for Alliant Tech Systems (ATK), he received a Masters in Business Administration from George Washington University. At the time of his passing, he was co-founder and managing partner of Millsapps, Ballinger, & Associates.

Erik enjoyed activities he could share with his wife and children, including coaching numerous sports teams, riding motorcycles, and spending nights playing board games. He was excited and eager to see his sons Zack, Josh, and Alex graduate from medical school, college, and high school, respectively, in the coming years. He will be remembered for his deep affection, loyalty, and care for his wife and children, and for his infectious sense of humor.

Erik is survived by his loving wife, Christina Bird Ballinger, sons, Zachary Ballinger, Joshua Ballinger and Alexander Ballinger, and brothers, Ben Ballinger, Kevin Ballinger, and Nick Ballinger.

A memorial service will be held at 12:00 PM on Friday, January 3rd at Saint John the Apostle Catholic Church located at 101 Oakcrest Manor, Leesburg, Virginia 20176. He will be interred at a later date at Arlington National Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, a memorial donation in Erik’s name may be made to the American



# Cemetery

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**Arlington National Cemetery**  
1 Memorial Ave.  
Arlington, VA, 22211

# Events

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**JAN**  
**3**

**Catholic Mass**

12:00PM

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Saint John the Apostle Catholic Church  
55 Oak Crest Manor, Leesburg, VA, US, 20176

# Comments

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“ I met Erik through the Home Inspection Industry as I met him at the National Association of Realtors Conference and helped him break into the home inspection space. He was a great man to work with and a very amiable person. May his memory be a blessing.

Dave Kogan



**Dave Kogan** - May 24 at 10:26 PM

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“ We were so shocked and saddened to hear of Erik's passing. Our prayers and warm thoughts to you Christina, Zack, Josh and Alex. So many fond memories of our sons playing sports together and the awesome dads coaching. The good Lord takes the good ones early. . .

Michele, Abby and Ben Knuff

**Michele D Knuff** - January 20, 2020 at 11:39 AM

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“ I don't even know where to begin - so many others have expressed their feelings so eloquently about Erik. It's heartening to see that he's had such a positive effect - CONSISTENTLY - on so many people throughout his life.

I became acquainted with Erik in graduate school at GW. Early on, it was easy to see all of his attributes: a natural leader, with innate instinct to elevate everybody on his team; his terrific, contagious sense of humor with a healthy dose of self-deprecation; and above all, despite his accomplishments (we all know there were many), his humility. Although Erik passed himself off as a regular guy, we all knew him to be exceptional - not the kind of person that you are likely to meet more the once in the span of a lifetime. I've always felt that I'm a better person for having known Erik and sincerely believe that I would not have gotten as much from my learning experience from GW if he had not been there as a carpool buddy, study partner and (of course) friendly competitor.

Above all, it was clear that Erik cared about and loved his family more than anything else in this world - and that is what I will remember the most about him.

**Ron Lichtinger** - January 03, 2020 at 10:30 AM

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“Balls was a great American through and through. He was many things...a true patriot, a great friend, a mentor, a dedicated father and husband, top-notch Naval Aviator, an Landing Signals Officer (LSO), a brave leader, a fearless competitor, wickedly funny, a fierce defender of honor, a lover of life... he was an exemplary role model! It is hard to imagine losing such a light in this world. Erik lived larger than life but did so with a self-deprecating humility that made him even more endearing to those he impacted.

Some of my earliest memories of Balls were from our time in the VAQ-135 Black Ravens together. Balls was my mentor in the “Fleet”. He gave me my callsign and immediately took me under his wing. He modeled how to really fly and fight the jet (EA-6B Prowler). Balls had complete control of the aircraft and could make it do wonderful and impressive things, he elevated the entire squadron to higher performance standards that set the tone for us in the Air Wing and across the Prowler community...by Erik’s lead, we were the best in the air, behind the “boat” and in the O’Club.

Balls was a leader. He took a keen interest in keeping others safe and making them better. As the lead Squadron LSO, he kept us safe day and night, in good and bad weather, through combat and in emergency. It was Erik who cultivated my deep love of waving (the act of LSO’s talking aircraft onto the aircraft carrier safely) that ultimately lead to AIRLANT LSO, the highlight of my military career.

Later in life, Erik and I would reconnect again in the defense industry. Balls had been working for ATK for over a decade when I had retired from the Navy and was working for Lockheed Martin. It was Balls who sought me out for a position at ATK. At first, I was reticent to accept a position as I enjoyed the challenge and people at Lockheed, but Balls persevered. He spoke so passionately about the atmosphere mission and people at ATK that I took the leap of faith. I have been at ATK, now Northrop Grumman for eight years now; it is the perfect fit just as Balls had said.

Christina, Zack, Josh and Alex, thank you for sharing your husband and father with the rest of us. He was a good man and great example for us all. He helped mentor me and chart the path of my life. I will never forget Balls, for his friendship, his leadership and his uncanny ability to make the difficult easy and the stressful less so with his quick wit and infectious smile.

This world is richer for Erik having lived well in it. Go rest high on that mountain Balls. Fair winds and following seas my friend!

-Moose  
Ken Masson



“ My wife, Julie, and I give our deepest sympathy to Christina and the family of Erik. I served with Erik in VAQ-133 30 years ago. I remember him as a superb Naval Aviator and an outstanding officer. His great attitude and sense of humor made him exactly the kind of guy you want to be in a squadron with. It was a privilege to have known him and to have served with him. Rest in peace, Shipmate. Jon and Julie Boe

Jon Boe - January 02, 2020 at 11:36 AM

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“ Dear Christina, Zach, Josh and Alex,

We are heartbroken over your loss and grieve with you on the passing of your phenomenal husband and dad. We are blessed to have been your neighbor for 14 years and to have known your dad in a personal way. His life was one of many actions and fewer words. As far as dads go, yours was a role model for me. Take comfort in knowing that as husbands and fathers come, God has given you the best of the best. Aside from our many conversations about life, several thoughts of Erik will stick with us throughout our lives. If I could count all of the throws and catches of baseballs and footballs between your dad and each of you (either in the front yard, street, or back yard of your beautiful home) that number would represent several orders of magnitude. The beauty and brightness with which he adorned your home every Christmas is something that brought joy to our entire neighborhood. And I don't think that our boys were the only ones in the neighborhood that your dad helped to teach learning to ride a bike without training wheels.

Erik was a man's man. A quick read of his life's summary, and one quickly realizes that he was someone special and how far most of us fall short. All of us who knew Erik understood that right away without even knowing about any of his credentials of background. My friend, thank you so much for the example that you were and for your Service in defending our freedom. And thank you, God, for blessing the Ballinger family with such an amazing man, husband, and dad.

Arnie & Judy Voketaitis

Arnie Voketaitis - January 02, 2020 at 10:54 AM

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“ So sorry to read this evening from one of our ATK colleagues about Erik’s passing. Would attend the funeral Mass but out of the country until Sunday. Erik was a class act and a great guy to be around. Very heavy heart tonight on New Year’s Eve. My deepest sympathy and prayers go out to his family. So sorry for your loss. - Mike Bender

**Mike Bender** - December 31, 2019 at 07:59 PM



“ Erik I will always love and miss Erik. As his uncle he was my hero. My sympathies to the family and all his friends. Erik will live in my heart forever. I thank him for being my friend. God bless him and his family.

**Harry Gramig** - January 01, 2020 at 02:29 PM



“ Good Bye Erik

A life filled with meaning is worthy of rest... (C. Potok)

I have been so proud of my “little” brother for a long time.

Early on, I was impressed that he knew his goal to become a pilot an a young age... sticking with that goal (educationally); graduating from UCLA (via OCC) and obtaining a spot for Navy Pilot training.

Wow - making it through Basic training, Flight-school, Carrier landing Qualifying, Naval Officer, Tours of duty.... Hundreds of Carrier landings; defending our Nation by flying combat missions in N. Iraq. I’m so proud of you!

More importantly your life meaning beyond service to Country - your service to God through your selfless dedication to your precious family. Faithful dedication to Christina for 30 years; 3 amazing Sons... all so accomplished and raised in the Catholic Faith. Musician, accomplished athletes, high education honors, and one in medical school.

Finally... after an amazing career in the Navy; you took responsibility of flying hundreds of passengers safely to their destinations as a pilot at United; worked in the defense industry; and your final career move was create a small business with a partner to employ others - always a life with meaning!

You have been such a great role model for my family (Matt & Sondra) - I’m so sorry you suffered with painful illness here at the end, but I look forward to visiting with you in heaven... retelling the “Ballinger“ stories of lore - for now a well deserved Rest!

Too costly in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.... (Ps 116.15)

I Love You - Your brother Kevin

**Kevin Ballinger** - January 01, 2020 at 02:53 PM



“ I am heartbroken. Words cannot express the sadness and disbelief I'm feeling about a person taken way too soon. To Erik's family, you are in my thoughts and prayers. I am so grateful that he had so much love and happiness in his life.

Erik - You don't know how many times I've thought about you all of these years. We always promised each other we would stay in touch. Every November, I would think about your past birthdays. I made you a plane cake one year. It took me hours, but it came out looking like the plane you would later fly. I remember taking you to the Playboy Club one year also. I was mortified, but you and your fraternity brothers thought it was hilarious. The stuffed pilot bear I got you for Christmas one year? I'm pretty sure you were carrying it around the night you met your future wife. Your welcome.

I didn't marry the helicopter pilot. I married a wonderful man and we'll be celebrating 25 years of marriage next July. We have two amazing boys. My oldest, KC, got his pilot's license in high school, even before he got his driver's license. He is now a first-class midshipman at the Naval Academy. I told him all about you and your love of flying and for the Navy. I wanted him to meet you one day. He will commission in May then report to flight school. He's going to be a Navy pilot. I would appreciate it if you would keep an eye on him. I should have stayed in touch with you. I'm so very sorry. I have such an unbearable amount of regret right now. You were such a special person in my life for so many years... I would have loved to have met your beautiful family. I can tell that you were very loved, so that eases my mind.

I have missed you so much. You'll always have a special place in my heart. Rest now. Fly with the angels when you're ready.

Kelly (McMahon) Navarro

**Kelly Navarro** - January 03, 2020 at 01:24 AM



“ I am in shock to hear about the passing of Erik. We were neighbors for over 10 years. Our boys went to school together. Erik and I both served in Naval Aviation and shared many of the same experiences during our time on active duty. I will always remember how active he was in the Leesburg community. I am especially fond of recalling his help with the ready bench for the Woodlea Watermocs. There is a generation of kids who had the pleasure of Erik getting them rallied together and off to their proper swim lane, all the while getting a big dose of his humor and usually a life lesson or two. My prayers to Christina and the boys. Erik is flying OK-3 wire passes in Heaven!

**Chuck Stowell** - January 08, 2020 at 12:53 PM