

Ray Petrowski's Tribute to Art Lizza at the Memorial Service on July 18, 2015

What can I say about Art

I first met Art in 1964 outside of hangar 135 at Ellington Field. We were standing in the grass introducing ourselves to each other when I noticed Art was standing very close to an ant mound. Before long Art was doing his version of an Irish jig as the ants swarmed all over his shoes and pant legs. Now I know I should have warned him when I first saw the ants but I thought what better way to welcome him to Texas, so I laughed instead. Needless to say Art had more than a few choice words for me. On that day a friendship was born and has lasted so many years.

Soon our families together with Larry Petty and his family were visiting each other with regularity. Vacations in Wimberly became a yearly ritual and many an enjoyable day was spent playing football with our kids or splashing about in the pool. Going to the medicine show at the 7A ranch was a must.

Art was an excellent engineering tech and had great mechanical ability. He and I worked together on many assembly and test projects from Gemini thru shuttle. I always tried to have Art on my crew because I knew he was dependable and would give his all to get a job done. Water work though was his preference. He enjoyed working with the engineers from landing and recovery and liked going out in the gulf to partake in tests being conducted there. For me going out on the Retriever was like penance for sins not yet committed. I always got sick. Art on the other hand considered each trip an adventure and more than once it was. Like the time they were underway and the anchor broke loose. He was out on deck and heard the chain rumbling as it played out. He said he tried to get the attention of the bridge but before anyone saw him the anchor grabbed and spun the ship 180 degrees. I'm sure the crew of a passing freighter was astounded by this maneuver and wondered what NASA was up to now. It's funny now but it could have been a calamity. Art was an excellent swimmer and was praised by both the LRD engineers and test subjects for the work he did in the gulf.

Art was very regimented and neat. He had the cleanest and most orderly work bench in the shop. Any thing out of place was noticed immediately. Woe to those who used his tools and did not replace them in the proper place. In comparison mine and Larry's bench looked like Sanford and son. Once when his apartment had been broken into and he called the police, the officer who came out and looked at the dresser that had been looted said he hadn't seen such neatness since he left the military. Being punctual was one of his traits. He hated to be late.

In his early years he became an avid runner. He and I often ran together but I quit when my knees gave out. He continued to run and added gym workouts to his schedule. When he heard he was going to become a diver he swam extra laps at the Y to gain body strength in preparation for the water work.

Art loved to play golf. After he and I retired we tried to play once a week with his son Wayne. Any time some one would say "can you believe the round I shot", Art would ask who kept score? If the

answer was I did his answer was your right I can't. He did have a hole in one on a day I wasn't playing. His words to me when he called to let me know of his feat were "can you believe I had a hole in one today" No I did not ask who kept score.

Art was very considerate and compassionate. Any time I was hospitalized he would come to visit almost daily. When my wife passed away at the hospital Art was there to help see me through my ordeal. For this I will always be grateful. To see him fading away was heart wrenching.

I know that Art is in a better place now and I bet he has already asked if they need help running the place. He will be sorely missed.