

*fidest "Cool," "calm" and "collected" temperament. I was on the AF press desk and he was OASD-PA's DDI and displayed all those traits during major public affairs challenges. He had a serious and studied in demeanor but he enjoyed good humor and his smile and laugh were unique and unforgettable. In retirement, Bridget and I saw Bill often at the commissary and exchange where he'd tell us about his latest ventures, golf score and children. It was always fulfilling for us to see a valued friend and mentor, an AF public affairs treasure, and such a fine human being. Consolation and peace to the Taylor family.*

*– Art Dederick*

## Leo Michael Terrill

Mike Terrill, a Lifetime Founder of AFPAAA with a 24-year active duty career in the Army and the Air Force, died July 6th at the Chandler Arizona Regional Medical Center of Covid-19. He was 83.

He was born in Hubbard, Oregon, and grew up in the Globe-Miami area of Arizona where his father was a miner for the Miami Inspiration Copper Company. He was an outstanding baseball player at Miami High School and was drafted by the Baltimore Orioles but when Mike graduated in 1955 he opted to enlist in the Army.

After basic training he went to Korea as a chaplain's assistant and clerk typist. In 1957 he received a hardship discharge to care for his siblings when his father was hospitalized with tuberculosis.

Mike worked in the same mine when he returned until he began his college education in 1958, first earning an associate degree from Palo Verde Community College, Blythe, California, and completing his bachelor degree in English from Northern Arizona University in 1960.

He returned home and taught English at his high school until he began his 22-year Air Force career in 1963 when he was commissioned through Officer Training School.

Initially he was assigned to logistics, including a tour at Da Nang, Vietnam, in 1967-68. He transitioned to Public Affairs when he was sent to Boston University, earning a master's degree in public relations in 1970.

Mike was the highly visible spokesman in 1979 when the deposed Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, was treated at Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland AFB, Texas. He had a similar, prominent role as the Air Force's Pentagon spokesman for the B-1 bomber and M-X/Peacekeeper ICBM from 1980-1984. His last assignment was as head of the Los Angeles Office of Public Affairs. He retired as a colonel in 1985.



In retirement he continued as a public relations and communications expert for businesses, advocacy groups, and government agencies. He worked for the Harris Group, Reston, Virginia; Los Alamos National Laboratory, New Mexico; the Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, Alexandria, Virginia, and Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, Long Beach, California.

From 2009-2016, until he retired to Mesa, Arizona, Mike was deputy director of Public Affairs for the Missile Defense Agency, Redstone Arsenal, Alabama.

Throughout his life Mike was active in community, church and charity causes including the Youth Impact Program, Kidz at Heart International, and the Miami Sports Hall of Fame.

Mike is survived by his wife of 62 years, Carolyn; sons Michael, Mark, and Marshall and daughter Mischael; seven grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. A celebration of Mike's life is planned for his birthday on February 15, 2021 with interment that day at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona.

Donations in Mike's memory may be made to the Air Force Public Affairs Alumni Association and sent to: Phil Ratliff, Treasurer, 868 Trevino Terrace, Lady Lake FL 32159

*Mike Terrill was one of our All-Star teammates when I was SAF/PA. He was humble, compassionate, wise, hardworking, and professional in every way. A team player. I love working shoulder to shoulder with this great American and Air Force officer. See you in heaven brother.*

*– Dick Abel*

*Truly sad news. I never had a chance to work with Mike, but I got to know him through our Annual Meetings. Just a super nice guy.*

*– Perry Nouis*

*My friendship with Mike dates to the 1970s in San Antonio when we had a great team of PAOs at Randolph, Lackland, Kelly and Brooks. His death has shaken the many friends and colleagues who have known him since then. We crossed paths many times since our San Antonio days, and I will remember him not only for his professionalism, but also his sense of humor and love of family. Dawn and I pray for strength for his family. We will miss Mike.*

*– Sam Giammo*

The many inspiring comments on Mike Terrill's passing remind us of the very best things about him as a PA practitioner and friend. I always appreciated the pleasure and instruction of Mike's company as he went about his work with limitless energy, enthusiasm, positivity and personal integrity – all delivered with his big trademark smile and friendly greeting. A PA professional we'll remember for a long time. Our con-

dolences and wish for peace to his family.

– **Art Dederick**

*So sad. He was one of the greats.*

– **Jay DeFrank**

For decades Mike was a dear friend, colleague, business partner, racquetball instructor and the example of a superb leader and teammate. I counted on Mike many, many times in difficult situations and he came through every time - without fail. I will miss his warm friendship and our hearts go out to Carolyn and his extended family. God Speed old friend.

– **Mike McRaney**

*So sorry to hear about Mike's death. He was a super professional.*

– **Jim Hart**

Mike was one of our Public Affairs pioneers – a true visionary, sage counselor and mentor to many. His energy, drive and commitment to excellence set an example for both his seniors and subordinates. I was privileged to understudy Mike when I reported to the Pentagon in 1978. He was the principal media advocate for the B-1B bomber and the M-X (Peacekeeper) ICBM. He always displayed a “can-do” attitude and was a master at working with the media with the unique ability to translate the highly technical into language everyone could understand. Learning and applying his communication skills propelled my career. In retirement we were together again at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama -- he as Missile Defense Agency Public Affairs officer and I as Army Contracting Command's Director of Public and Congressional Affairs. Janet and I enjoyed reconnecting with Mike and Carolyn and much treasure our time together in Huntsville. Mike touched many lives and will never be forgotten. Rest easy good friend.

– **Art Forster**

*Indeed, Mike was one of my heroes as well! May he rest in peace.*

– **Doug Kennett**

AFPA has lost a great one! I worked with Mike and Rick Lehner on the Peacekeeper missile while assigned to the Pentagon, and later as he guided our Public Affairs efforts in the Los Angeles Public Affairs Office. He never had a bad day and made sure your day was the best. His sage counsel was the best. I looked forward to seeing him every year at our annual meetings. Rest in peace Mike — we will all miss you.

– **Phil Ratliff**

*Mike Terrill was unequalled in public affairs savvy and talent. We go back a long way – from the mid-70s when Mike was at the Pentagon, and I was at the Aeronautical Systems Division. We worked closely acquisition programs. I was Director of Public Affairs at Air Training Command at Randolph AFB in 1979 and Mike ran the Lackland AFB PA shop. The Shah of Iran was flown to Wilford Hall Hospital, and the press descended on Lackland. State Department guidance, relayed to us by Mike Burch, told us to kick the media off the base. Mike handled that unenviable task with true professionalism, as his appearance that evening on NBC national news demonstrated.*

– **Dave Shea**

I was saddened to learn of Mike's death. I worked with him at SAFPA, SDIO, and for him at the Harris Group in Reston.

– **Dave Rigby**

*Mike and I worked together four times during our lengthy friendship. In 1979, as I completed OTS, Lt. Col. Terrill at Lackland's PA office wanted to see me. It felt like an interview. A couple of days later I was assigned to Mike's office. I was a bit disappointed was no flying mission, but it set the stage for my working life. all because of Mike Terrill. In the 1981 he requested that I be his assistant on his Pentagon team when he headed PA for the contentious, politically pressurized M-X missile program. Working for him in the M-X office was a doctoral program in practical public affairs, and all the years I spent working for him are still the best jobs and experiences I have ever had, both personally and professionally. At M-X I was around the cream of the PA crop—Neil Buttimer, Scott Duncan, Mike McRaney, Pat Mullaney, Ron Rand, Johnnie Whitaker, Art Forster, Dave Shea, and so many others. The strategic missile guys loved Mike's work ethic and outgoing personality. as Almost all of them had never been around Air Force Public Affairs people and had the chance to see how hard we worked and what they could successfully accomplish to support a mission. Mike's last assignment, chief of the LA office, was his “dream job”. He loved the entertainment industry and providing assistance to movies and TV shows that involved the Air Force. Neither of us was on active duty when we worked for a strategic missile consulting group from 1987-1991. I was the PA officer for the Missile Defense Agency in 2009, and although I doubted if he would move from Arizona, I offered Mike a job in our Huntsville, Alabama, office; he jumped at the chance. Mike became my deputy. He had the entire MDA office in Huntsville wrapped around his finger in no time and it seemed like Mike knew every one of the 5,000 people there, from the three-star MDA director to the lady at the Starbucks. Even though Mike was in his 70s, he loved his work so much that although he spoke of finally retiring and returning to Arizona, he brushed off any mention I made of it. I learned later that he told Carolyn that he felt he had an obligation to stay and help me at MDA until I retired, and that's what he did. In February 2016 we both retired on the same day – Jodi and I moved to France, Mike to Arizona. We spoke on phone a couple times a month and exchanged emails on a regular basis. The Friday before he passed away, I received an anniversary card from Mike and Carolyn with about a dozen photos he took at my wedding in 1989 – that was Mike in a nutshell, always thinking about others. It's very hard to realize my phone won't ring anymore with his caller ID, thankfully I have his voicemails and it is great to still hear his voice!*

– **Rick Lehner**

Mike was a world expert and master of communicating on challenging and controversial weapon systems that advanced the cause of missile defense to keep America and the western world safe. He was beloved by all that met him and knew him. He was gentle, he was kind, he had a sparkle of optimism in his eye that was never dimmed and a heart that never ceased loving, caring and bringing joy. He had a presence that was a light of joy that shined on everyone he was around. God bless Mike for his 83 years of sunshine. Rest in Peace.

– **Riki Ellison**

