



Colin Butts

Colin Clarke Manning Butts made his final flight on July 23, 2025. He was born November 15, 1950, at Sewart Air Force Base, Smyrna, TN, to Col. Earl Adolphus Butts of Cloud Chief, Oklahoma and Ellen Manning Butts of Camden, South Carolina. He passed away peacefully in his sleep due to complications from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). During his three-year struggle with ALS, he was always cheerful and never unhappy with his lot in life, always saying that he “had had a good run.” While growing up in an Air Force family, he lived in many different countries around the world and enjoyed them all, but his favorite was the four years he spent in Japan. Graduating from South Kent School, CT, in 1970, Colin followed his father and two older brothers into aviation as a pilot. He was also a certified Airframe and Power Plant mechanic, working both as an instructor pilot and as a mechanic at the airport in Milton, FL that his father ran after retiring from the Air Force. After a number of years there, he moved up to fly as a commercial airline pilot.

In 1987, when he was between airline jobs, his father asked him to come home to help care for his mother who was partially paralyzed and unable to speak due to a stroke. For 15 years until her death, Colin and his father were her devoted caregivers. Afterwards, as his elderly father was beginning to need assistance, Colin spent 12 more years as his father’s caregiver. During those 27 years, he was a blessing to both parents and made their lives more comfortable and pleasant for their remaining years in the house they had built

50 years before. After his father's death, Colin moved to Wilmington to be near family.

A member of MENSA, Colin was extraordinarily bright. His natural curiosity made the Internet his playground, spending many hours looking up interesting facts – the quirkiest the better. He loved to surprise friends, family, and especially any new people he happened to meet, with the latest interesting factoid he had found. Colin also enjoyed astronomy and astrophysics and built several large telescopes to gaze at the stars. A sweet and warm-hearted guy, he made friends with everyone he met. Colin's constant companion for the last 25 years was his beloved feral cat, Tutankhamen, whom he called "Tut".

Colin was preceded in death by his parents, and his middle brother, Noel Radford Butts.

He is survived by his oldest brother, David Rogerson Williams Butts, (wife Susan) of Wilmington; and his three nephews: James Chestnut Butts (wife Margie) of Wilmington, John Nicholas Kane Butts (wife Christi) of Asheville, Dr. David Butts Rion (wife Christine) of Raleigh; 8 grandnephews and grandnieces; 4 great-grandnephews and great-grandnieces.

And to quote a friend: "he is the nicest person I have ever known . . . and also the wackiest." Colin happily marched to a different drummer throughout his life and his bright and cheerful personality is greatly missed.

A graveside service will be held later at the family plot in the Quaker Cemetery, Camden, South Carolina.

Tribute Wall

DB

“ Here's a picture of the happy aviator in 1976. He was flying the Piper Cub from the rear seat, I was in the front taking pictures of him. His personality and sense of humor come through strongly in this picture. David Butts

David Butts - December 03, 2025 at 05:43 PM