

Bruce 'Meltdown' Newkirk

♥ Gone But Never Forgotten ♥

July 28, 1947 ~ December 17, 2021

Bruce was taken from us on December 17, 2021 after a brief illness & hospital stay.

Saturday March 5, 2022 was a bitter-sweet day. Saying the 'official' farewell to the single-most important person in my life was difficult to say the least. Being surrounded by people who Love & Respect Bruce genuinely helped to lighten the weight on my shoulders.

People traveled in from across Arizona and across the Country to be there for us... It was incredibly wonderful and heartwarming.

The day started at Superstition Harley-Davidson in Apache Junction with a lights & sirens escort down the 202 by the Patriot Guard Riders, to American Legion Post 35 in Chandler. Thank you so much! You certainly provided him quite a sendoff!

A moving Military Honors ceremony rendered by US Air Force Airmen and the Rifle Squad from American Legion Post 39 in Gilbert started off the program.

Speakers were myself, our niece Stevee, and Bruce's long-time friend Ernie; as Pastor Cliff of the Christian Motorcyclists Association guided us all along this emotional path. His presence was particularly special and 'full circle', as Pastor Cliff also married us ... nearly 26 years ago.

The afternoon continued with family & friends enjoying camaraderie, breaking bread together, and sharing stories.

Bruce was born in Burbank, CA. His family lived in the areas of Lancaster and Quartz Hill. He grew up watching the jets out of Edwards Air Force Base.



After graduation from Antelope Valley HS in Lancaster, Bruce volunteered for Military Service. He was 19 years old when he enlisted in the Air Force, in 1966. He served in Da Nang Viet Nam as a gunfighter crew chief on the F-4 fighter jets.

After being released from the military in 1970, he worked in a variety of jobs but always came back to motorcycles & autos.

His life-long love for motorcycles and automobiles started at an early age. He worked and saved up for his first car by age 13. His first of many motorcycles came not long after. He enjoyed a lifetime of buying & selling, repairing, and customizing bikes & cars.

Bruce was a talented custom painter. He established The Cherry Shop in California. In 1992 he relocated to Tempe Arizona and opened the Cherry Shop here.

We met in 1994, married in 1996,



and started *AZ Rider Motorcycle News* in 1999. In our years together we covered a lot of miles ... by motorcycle, trike, and classic cars. We met a lot of great people in that time and created some wonderful memories.

Bruce was a private person who preferred being behind the camera. 'We don't *make* the news. We report the news.' ☺ He cared about Veterans issues, homelessness, the state of the world & its future, bikers' rights, and people in general – their wellbeing.

My thanks to all of you who put SO MUCH into making Bruce's Celebration of Life as beautiful, positive, and memorable as it could be. Thank You also to ALL who attended. It meant a great deal to me and to our Family.

Pastor Cliff shared this message, "Bruce & Betsy were/are good, shiny examples of the solidarity of the motorcycle world. Even though they rode Independent, they could be part of / travel with any motorcycle group or persons. Our patches define us, but it's the Brotherhood of the motorcyclists that connects us." *Pastor Cliff CMA*

Bruce loved this community and was so glad to be a part of it!

It was an absolute Honor to be approached by ABATE of Arizona and the Too Broke For Sturgis committee, and for the TBFS Bike Show to be dedicated in Bruce's name. My being invited to participate in this year's trophy presentations meant so much. I am very appreciative of the love & support that our ABATE family has shown us.

Hug your loved ones. Make every moment count. ♥

Betsy 'Fallout' Newkirk

