


Walter O. (Buck) McCants



I was born and raised in the small town of Lancaster, S.C. While at the Academy I played baseball until I injured my knee at the end of my Second Class Year, and was fortunate enough to be the Fall Semester Squadron Commander of 19th Squadron. 19th was known as the “Playboy” squadron, and its original patch sported a Playboy bunny, but we were forced to design a new patch at the beginning of the 1967 fall semester, so we had no patch for my entire first-class year.

My high school sweetheart graduated from the University of South Carolina in May, 1968, I graduated on 5 June, and we got married on 28 July. We’re still together almost 50 years later, and it’s been a wonderful life!

I thoroughly enjoyed my AF career of almost 22 years, and I’ve never been associated with any finer group of people. Some highlights:

- Two assignments of almost 7 years total in that magnificent bird, the C-141. Honored to serve as SQ/CC of the 14 MAS at Norton AFB from 1982-83
- AC-119K gunship pilot in Vietnam. Trained three crews of VNAF, turned over the aircraft to them and went home. Most challenging Instructor Pilot job ever!
- Olmsted Scholar from 1976-78. Studied at The Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva Switzerland. Hard work, but somebody had to do it!
- National War College followed by two years in the Pentagon. Lucky to leave in two!
- Assistant Chief of Staff at HQ, Military Airlift Command (now AMC) followed by two years as Vice Commander, 60th MAW, Travis AFB
- Legion of Merit w/1 OLC, Distinguished Flying Cross, Meritorious Service Medal with 1 OLC, Air Medal with 9 OLC, AF Commendation Medal, Vietnamese AF Pilot Wings

After retirement in March, 1990 I was fortunate to fly for Federal Express for almost 16 years. My wife and I have two sons, both of whom are USAFA grads: Matt and Mike, in the Classes of 2004 and 2006, respectively. I’ve been a Sabre Society member since its founding in 1995, and am so grateful for the success in life that the Academy experience has allowed me enjoy. My best friends have been, and still remain, some of my Class of ’68 classmates.

Thank you for choosing this path less taken in life by most, and may your ride be as rewarding and enjoyable as mine!