



**Steven Struharik 8/15/1948 – 5/27/2026**

Steven John Struharik has departed from this earthly realm as a dedicated servant, leader, and mentor. Born to Paul and Helen Struharik in Barberton Ohio, his technical enthusiasm and early fascination with aviation helped to establish his lifelong hobby of Ham Radio. He became a licensed operator, call sign WA8EIH, at age 11.

Throughout his childhood and teenage years, Steve cultivated his contagious sense of humor with the likes of the Three Stooges, the Ghouardi show, Mad Magazine, and early rock and roll music. He spent copious amounts of time in the outdoors with his father, learning about hunting, fishing, and agriculture. His mother, a Sunday school teacher of 25 years, supported his moral upbringing and academic discipline. Steve was also a Sunday school teacher for 8 years. He built his lifelong presence as a coach and father upon his wholesome American upbringing.

During his time as a student at Norton High School Steve was active in football and track and field all four years, while making many great memories with friends as an employee of the Barberton Brookside Country Club. He was also a charismatic member of the ham radio club and model airplane club. His colleagues elected him as class president during his freshman and sophomore year, and he served as president of the student council during his senior year. He graduated with the class of 1966, was the class speaker, and was given the Lion's Club Award for Service at the ceremony.

Steve went on to enroll at The Ohio State University, where he delved deeper into his passion for electronics and communication under the guidance of Dr. Kurt Levis, making many lifelong friends and earning a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering. Among a world of opportunities, Steve chose a path of service by enlisting as an officer in the U.S. Navy. He became an instructor of engineering in Mare Island, California, where he "sailed a desk" by teaching nuclear physics to submariners for the Nuclear Navy. Steve's affable nature created strong friendships with officers and students alike, but one relationship proved pivotal to the rest of his life. While serving in the Navy he met one of his closest friends, Stephen Sontag, who soon introduced him to his sister Jean. That introduction led to a happy marriage that lasted over fifty years.

Upon his honorable discharge, Lt. Struharik transformed his love of Ham Radio into a long and successful career where his skill with applied mathematics and antenna design contributed to foundational work in modern telecommunications. Steve and Jean started their marriage in Vallejo, California and moved across the country to

eventually settle in Myersville, Maryland. Their two sons, Michael and John, enjoyed a bucolic and happy childhood there. Steve's work in satellite communications at COMSAT Laboratories led to an opportunity at NASA's John Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio, bringing him back to his roots. At NASA, he forged more lifelong friendships with colleagues while performing pioneering work in designing and operating the Earth station for the Advanced Communications Technology Satellite (ACTS), a prototype that has evolved into the technology that supports modern satellite internet, GPS, and many other applications. Steve particularly enjoyed his ability to test and steer the satellite, which was built in New Jersey and carried into orbit by the Space Shuttle Discovery on mission STS-51 in September of 1993.

Steve continued to raise his family in the greater Cleveland area. He was a volunteer football coach and an active member of Ascension Lutheran Church in North Olmsted, where he served as a Stephen Minister, counseling people who were in difficult or desperate life situations. After Mike and John enrolled at The Ohio State University, Steve and Jean returned to Myersville, to the very same house, to continue his work at Lockheed Martin. From there he transitioned from management to a technical role at IOT Systems, a small specialty company founded by his close friends and colleagues. As a consultant, Steve and Jean skipped the empty nest phase by traveling the globe, testing satellite Earth stations in Rome, Tel Aviv, Sao Paulo, Bangkok, and elsewhere. Steve's decades-long career helped to establish the communication technology that we take for granted today, connecting people around the world in ways that had previously only existed as ideas in the science fiction books and films of his youth.

Steve was deeply involved in the communities he loved and was active in many civic causes. In his final phase of life, the two communities closest to his heart were St. Mark's Lutheran Church, and the Antietam Radio Association. Steve was a devoted member of the Lutheran Church and was a role model to many, leading by example to walk the path of service through the teachings of Jesus Christ. Building upon his experience as a Stephen Minister, he revisited his role as an educator to continue teaching Sunday School while also supporting the church counsel. As a ham, Steve was enthusiastic about sharing the many benefits of his technical knowledge and aptitude. The Antietam Radio Association knew him as a prolific "Elmer" who generously helped others and brought many people into the hobby. His final efforts were to conduct routine equipment tests for disaster preparedness, assuring that emergency services would have sustained communication channels during times when ordinary networks were damaged by storms. More than anything, Steve found a special joy in being a grandparent. His grandchildren gave him the nickname "Beba", by which he shall always be known.

Steve's career, mind, heart, and faith were only outshined by his enduring commitment to his family and friends. He will be remembered for helping many in need, or simply guiding us to better paths and better thoughts. He had a way, partially through his loud and contagious laugh, of making people feel peaceful and at ease. He passed away suddenly and peacefully while leading a routine session of the Four States Net on May 27, 2026, doing what he loved. His radio friends were quick to respond and send help, greatly easing the tremendous impact of his departure. The strength of his faith leaves no room for doubt that he is now safely in the hands of God, reacquainted with the friends, loved ones, and pets that he had missed so dearly, just as much as we will miss him.

Steve is preceded in his passing by his mother, Helen, his father, Paul, and many Aunts, Uncles, and Cousins. He is survived by his loving wife Jean, brother Paul (H'lum), sons Mike (Haiyan) and John (Sherry), four grandchildren, along with many cousins, nieces, nephews, friends, colleagues and loved ones.

Steve's spirit has ascended to Heaven and his earthly remains will be formally laid to rest on Saturday, June 6th, Starting at 1:00 pm at Saint Marks Lutheran Church, 12704 Wolfsville Road, Smithsburg, Maryland with a service led by Pastor Eric Moser starting at 2:00pm. A supper and sharing of testimonials will be held onsite after the burial. A viewing will also be held at the J.L. Davis Funeral Home, 12525 Bradbury Ave, Smithsburg,

Maryland, on the evening of Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup> from 7:00-9:00pm. A full and proper celebration of his life will be planned to take place for his friends and family in Ohio, details to be announced.