



## Mark Scott Benker

May 4, 1956 - September 15, 2020

Mark Scott Benker - May 04, 1956 – September 15, 2020

Mark was born in Walnut Creek, California, as Mark Scott Ours, where he spent most of his early life. He developed a love for scuba diving at the young age of 12, and by the time he was 14 he was a certified scuba instructor. Scuba diving remained a life-long passion for Mark and was the subject of many his adventures.

In November 1973, at the age 17, Mark left home and joined the United States Army. It was at this time that he decided to officially change his name to Mark Scott Benker, in honor of his step-father, Robert Benker. Shortly after enlisting he was stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where spent most of his military career.

Six months later he completed the Airborne Course, received his diploma, and joined the 82nd Airborne Division. During his time in the 82nd he successfully completed over 100 jumps. In October of 1975 he completed Jungle Warfare Training and was designated a “Jungle Expert”. He was then sent to Panama, where he had to sleep in trees and even developed jungle foot rot. Mark completed his service in mid-November of 1976. After his time in the Army, he joined the National Guard, as a member of the 570th Military Police, where he spent two years until he was honorably discharged in November 1979.

Outside of the military, Mark had a brief career as a licensed real estate broker in 1977. After that, he worked in sound system installation, installing speakers and other equipment in movie theaters around the Bay Area. He also spent

many years working with his step-father, Robert Benker, in the “Benker’s Refinishing” business where he learned to refinish Pianos and other furniture. In 1985 Mark got a job as an operator at the Shell Oil Refinery in Martinez California. While there, he spent many years on auxiliary fire crew, and enjoyed trips to the Reno Fire School. He eventually worked his way up to shift team leader and worked there for 30 years until his retirement in 2016. During his retirement, he liked to spend his time driving and occasionally racing his beloved Miata. He spent some time on the track at both Sonoma Raceway and the then Mazda Raceway in Monterey California. It was at Laguna Seca, on April 1, 2016, where he got the opportunity to race his white Miata, number 62, amongst hundreds of others racing their cars around track. It was a great day.

In February of 2018, Mark and his wife Susan purchased a Heartland Big Horn 5th wheel RV and decided to tour the nation. They started in California and traveled the southern United States passing through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and eventually to Florida. On their way back, they headed North up the East coast as far as New Jersey and Pennsylvania before heading back home to California.

Mark was much loved for his kindness, funny sense of humor and his ability to always make you laugh.

Mark is survived by his wife of 38 years, Susan Benker and by his daughters Sandra Boyle of Black Mountain, North Carolina and Sarah Benker of San Jose, CA. Mark is also survived by his brother Karl Lucas Ours, of Pine Grove, CA, and his sisters Michelle Betz of Pioneer, CA, and Doranna Benker-Gilkey of McKinleyville, CA.

A memorial service will be held for Mark at the home of Susan Benker at 1132 Gannet Court, Fairfield, Ca. 94533 on Saturday October 3rd, 2020 at 1:00 P.M. All are invited and covid-19 masks will be provided.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Mark Scott Benker.



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October 03, 2020 at 02:56 PM



“ *Mark and Pati Short purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet* for the family of Mark Scott Benker.



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**Mark and Pati Short** - October 02, 2020 at 12:15 AM

LD

“ A great guy and excellent supervisor. Mark was my first STL on Team 1 when I hired on at Shell in 2009 at 56 years young. He respected what I brought to the table in life experience while may having a few limits that might not be found in younger employees. I remember showing up at the gate having just been issues my training manuals for my first plant SW (Sour Water) and he took the time to stop what he was doing to come down with his Shell truck to pick me up, saving me from lugging all this stuff up the long stairs and through the units to the Crack Products BRM We had a nice discussion welcoming me to the unit during the ride--he cared about people. I also recall him approaching me when I qualified on my first unit SW and offering to pay for the meal that tradition called for newly qualified operators to provide for the team. I declined his offer but it was nice that he cared enough to offer considering a new employee might be tight on money. We also shared the common bond of being military vets and sometime exchanged war stories of our military experiences--his in the Army and mine in the Air Force. He was always extremely knowledgeable and helpful when any issue arose and you count on him having your back. I hope he had some time to pursue his goal of racing his Miata as he left us way too some after all his years of service to the military and Shell Oil, as has been the case with too many I have been associated with. You will always be respected and missed. RIP Mark

*Lewis Derfuss  
Retired Shell CP Operator*

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**Lewis Derfuss** - September 24, 2020 at 08:45 PM

 Sarah  
Benker

“ I can't believe you are gone but you will certainly not be forgotten. I miss you so much.

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**Sarah Benker** - September 23, 2020 at 04:02 PM

MS

“ Benker and I have a lot of things in common. We both served in the military. I left active duty in 2008 and was hired at Shell the same year. Benker was my first Team Leader. I remember the first day sitting in his office listening to him lay down the rules of our team, Team 1. He also laid out basics on how to be successful.

*Benker was always supportive of me in everything that I did as well as my commitment to my family, the USAF Reserves and my civilian Search and Rescue Team.*

*I found him to be a fair man and promoted growth. He was a "real" supervisor that totes the line that the company wanted him to tote but he also was the kind of man that filtered the shit from leadership that prohibited his crew from getting the job done. Benker developed a team that was dependable and got the job done.*

*We were like family. We broke bread together at work and away from work. Benker made work a fun environment and it didn't feel like a job working for him. Goldsberry and I have been SCUBA diving with him in Monterey. He enjoyed racing and we shared those stories. He shared his leadership experiences and survival experiences with me.*

*I love you brother. I miss you and you are in my heart.  
Mark Short and Family*

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**Mark A Short** - September 23, 2020 at 12:35 AM

DL

“ There are so many memories working with Mark I'll likely miss the best ones to the ones that are available at the moment. Mark was always a good humored person, he paired well with others and especially those who also had quick dry wit. Ray Olson was the first I remember, those two together were a riot. Mark and Bruce Burkey was another funny duo. But Mark didn't need anyone to be funny with, he was a natural. Turnarounds always presented challenges, pressurized pipes with hydrocarbon or sour water at the older parts of the unit could get you sprayed sometimes and Mark caught one square in the face and chest with others present. 😂 Just part of the job in the 90's. After serving 3 years on the Adjustment Committee I turned over my position to Mark and he served the role with compassion and honor, a solid support for workers at the refinery. Later he became a really good Shift Team Leader. My point is that whatever Mark was tasked to do, he did it to the best of his ability and not because of peer pressure or politics. Mark was a friend and a man of integrity. He never let the short-lived label of W.O. slow his stride, he overcame and became the leader we knew he was. I'll never regret sharing half my sandwiches or limiting him to 3-questions per shift. He was unequalled in humor and humility. I will always regard him as friend and leader. God Bless and thank you for being my friend. Wish we could have gotten together one more time. 🙌🙏🕊️👉

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Don Lapacek - September 22, 2020 at 12:30 AM

VM

“ I had the honor of being a coworker of Mark’s. When things became a bit confrontational, it would be Mark who would make some comical remark, Blake that Benker way, tilt his head then just turn and walk away...He wasn’t the type to perpetuate negative drama! Not just a “funny guy”, intelligent as well. He always talked of his family within such love, always with a smile eyes lit up....he will be miss by all of his friends and especially his family....but never forgotten....

Vicki Martinez - September 21, 2020 at 07:38 PM

JB

“ My deepest condolences for all of you. He was a very special person. He was always so kind to one of my best friends his Mom and that endeared him to me. Mark and I also shared the same birthday. He was a lot of fun and showed such caring for his family.

Judy Bond - September 21, 2020 at 02:44 AM

CZ

“ I worked with Mark many years at the Shell Martinez refinery. Mark was always able to help defuse tense situations, especially when people’s feelings were involved. I really enjoyed his dry and subtle sense of humor, even when I was the unwitting butt of his joke. Sorry and Sad for Mark to leave much too young.

Craig Zimmerman - September 18, 2020 at 09:14 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Mark Scott Benker.



September 18, 2020 at 06:42 PM

CZ

“ Mark and I worked many years together at the Shell Martinez refinery. Mark was always able to help defuse tense situations, especially when people's feelings were involved. I really enjoyed his dry and subtle sense of humor, even when I was the unwitting butt of his joke. Sorry and Sad for Mark to leave much too young.

Craig Zimmerman

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Craig Zimmerman - September 18, 2020 at 05:45 PM

SB

“ When I think of my dad I think of all the times we went shooting together at the range. It didn't matter that I wasn't a perfect shot or my stance looked off but he was always impressed by how much I improved each time. I took shooting a gun very seriously but being there with my dad made it a little less scary. I miss you and love you so much dad.

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Sarah Benker - September 18, 2020 at 05:38 PM

ST

“ A crazy hot day, and Dad stood in a very long line because I wanted to get pictures in front of the giant tree in the Animal Kingdom. He went along with everything the photographer said and even managed to smile in this one. I love you, Dad.



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Sandy Turner - September 16, 2020 at 10:23 PM

ST

“ After a long day in the hot sun wandering all around the Magic Kingdom, we were able to try our hands at a dessert fire works show (again). We had tried this so many times at Disneyland that Dad was skeptical. But after a while we all agreed it was very well done and perfect seats for the fireworks. He was always willing to give something a try, especially if he would make any of his girls smile.



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**Sandy Turner** - September 16, 2020 at 10:17 PM

MB

“ *The best brother in the world.*

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**Michelle Betz** - September 16, 2020 at 06:49 PM

OO

*Honor to have met such loving and kind men. We had dinner and at dinner he thanked me for being where God put when I needed to be. R.I.P. Mark.*

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**Orphie Ocelotl** - October 03, 2020 at 02:44 PM