



Christine Henderson Yecny

January 6, 1948 - March 19, 2017

Christine Henderson Yecny passed away March 19, 2017 in San Luis Obispo, California, after a short illness. Criss was born January 6, 1948, the middle daughter of Robert L. and Carolyn M. Henderson. She grew up on a pear ranch in Kelseyville, California, where she attended local schools and was a member of the Clearlake Junior Horsemen, the Kelseyville 4-H Club, and various school organizations where she inevitably took a leadership role. She learned a wide range of skills: raising 4-H sheep and steers; competing on her favorite horse, Bart, in horse shows; hunting, fishing and swimming; driving farm equipment and irrigating orchards; baking award winning yeast breads and sewing stylish wool outfits for competition.

However, the activity that won her heart was flying airplanes. With her pilot father's encouragement, she began ground school training even before leaving for college at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. She earned her private pilot's license at the San Luis Obispo County Airport in 1966, where she also enrolled in the Mustang Flying Club. It was the club president, Alan Yecny, who was destined to become the love of her life.

They were married in 1973 while circling in a plane over Clear Lake in Lake County. The rest of their life together was built around flying. Criss went on to earn her commercial pilot's license and then became a certified flight instructor. Her second student was her sister, Diane, and it was Al who gave

Diane all of her preparatory phase checks. Criss also became a charter member of the San Luis Obispo chapter of the 99's, an all women pilot organization.

Together, Criss and Al developed Air San Luis, a combination charter service, flight school, Cessna sales and aircraft maintenance center. They had been co-CEO's for 41 years. With Al, Criss belonged to the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the San Luis Obispo Pilots Association (SLOPA), the San Luis Obispo Elks Club and the San Luis Obispo Moose Lodge.

As they built their business, they also built their family. They raised two sons, Lee and Keith, who grew up experiencing the worlds of flying, pear farming, school sports, and outdoor sports like hunting, fishing, and camping. Criss's life revolved around her boys and their activities.

Criss always loved watching sports, whether it was her sons' soccer or tennis games, NASCAR races or her beloved 49ers. However, when it came to air races, she loved to enter the competition. She flew as navigator in the big Powder Puff Derbies with pilot friends like Wanda Strassburg and Marci Barnet. She piloted the plane in the shorter Palms-to-Pines Air Races with her mom, her sister or a friend serving as navigators. One year Criss and Diane competed in matching maternity smocks when son, Lee, was on the way.

Criss's favorite partner, however, was Al. The last races she flew were with him in San Luis Obispo. They won the SLO 99's Race three years in a row (1998, 1999, and 2000) after which they were barred from the competition and asked to help run the event!

Criss will be remembered for her kindness, her quick mind, her ready smile and fun loving spirit, and her unswerving loyalty to her family and friends. She

will also be remembered for her cooking and entertaining skills, her wicked pinochle playing, her love of crosswords, and her love of animals, especially her dear little dog, Mayly.

She was predeceased by her son, Keith Henderson Yecny; her father, Robert L. Henderson; her sister, Melissa Henderson; her sister-in-law, Cindy Yecny; and her niece, Lynn A. Patten.

Criss leaves behind her husband of 43 years, Alan K. Yecny; her son, Lee Alan Yecny (fiancé Renee Bell); her mother, Carolyn Henderson-Rohner (E.A. "Skip" Rohner), her sister, Diane L. Henderson (Sydney C. Stokes), and her brothers-in-law, Kenneth Yecny (Jane), Gerald Yecny (Pat), and Earl Yecny. She also leaves her niece, Megan Brewster, and nephews, Earl Yecny Jr., Bill Yecny and Andy Yecny.

A memorial service will be held at 1:00 p.m. on April 22, 2017 at the Olson Barn, 4848 Caballeros Ave., San Luis Obispo. Contacts: slopeach@charter.net or al@airsanluis.com. In lieu of flowers please consider a donation to Woods Humane Society, 875 Oklahoma Ave, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405.

A graveside service will follow at a later date in Kelseyville, California.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR **22**. 1:00 PM (PT)

Olson Barn
4848 Cabelleros ave
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
al@airsanluis.com