



## Carl William Sohns Obituary

September 8, 1952 - May 3, 2014

Carl W. Sohns, 61, of Oak Ridge died at home on 03 May 2014 after a long struggle against pancreatic cancer. A native of Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, Carl moved with his family to Asheville, North Carolina in 1971 and enrolled in Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College. He was drafted into the United States Army in 1972, and served at Fort Lee, Virginia. Following his honorable discharge, Carl completed his studies at AB Tech and came to Oak Ridge in 1977 as an electronics technician in the Centrifuge Division at K-25. Carl earned a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Tennessee in 1981 and returned to the centrifuge program, then transferred to ORNL's Instrumentation and Controls Division in 1985. During 28 years as a development engineer at ORNL, Carl worked on a variety of projects at all three Oak Ridge facilities as well as on national and international projects. He was widely known for his easygoing demeanor and quirky sense of humor as well as his considerable technical expertise. He received several patents and numerous awards, including a Secretary of Energy Achievement Honor Award and two R&D 100 awards, for his work before retiring in 2013. In his leisure time, Carl enjoyed challenging himself and mastering new skills. He was a licensed commercial pilot and certified flight instrument instructor, as well as a master scuba diver and skilled craftsman. In addition to aviation and scuba, Carl enjoyed motorcycling, model trains, travel, home projects and cooking. He appreciated fine machinery and enjoyed music of all genres. He was devoted to his cats and had a soft spot for all animals. Carl was the son of Carl B. Sohns and Geraldine S. Sohns, both deceased. He is survived by his wife, Susan Sherrow, of Oak Ridge and his brother, Richard Sohns, of Asheville. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Humane Society of the United States or the Lustgarten Foundation. A celebration of Carl's life will be held at a future date.

# Comments

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“ My sincere condolences go out to You and Carl's families Susan. I thought a lot of Carl and was fortunate to be able to work with him off and on during my time there at ORNL. Prayers to you and your family during this time of mourning.

Tony & Pam Rucci  
Reno, Nevada

Tony & Pam Rucci - Reno, NV - Co-Worker @ ORNL - June 01, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Carl walking the cats - or vice versa; Carl the subject matter expert at work; Carl the great neighbor; Carl the good man. Lest we forget.

Nancy & Bob Leicht - May 21, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Susan,  
I've been out of town nearly 3 weeks and only learned of his passing today.  
This is so sad and such a loss.

Carl was one of my favorite and most respected colleagues, he had a very rare combination of technical intuition and practical understanding informed by academic achievement well beyond his formal credentials. I found his direct and matter of fact ways so refreshing and efficient. His sardonic humor was quick, stimulating, engaging and always spot on. Carl was quietly competent and many not skilled in his discipline probably had no idea how technically excellent he was because he made very challenging tasks seem like every day business and always made things work one way or another.

He was optimistic and upbeat to the end, I really thought he was recovering.  
I will surely miss him.

Tony Moore - Claxton, TN - Colleague - May 17, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Carl was a great guy. As I remember Carl/Bill, he was a quiet soul but had a wonderful sense of humor....a LOT of fun.

Last time I saw Carl was at our 40th high school reunion. My wife and I talked with him a long time. I was amazed at how much he accomplished in his life. Very cool.

You'll be missed buddy!



“ It's hard for me to comprehend Bill's passing. He was known as 'Bill' growing up in Whitefish Bay next door to me. We went through grade school and high school together. Where ever he went, I went and where ever I went he went. We were pretty much inseparable until his family moved to Ashville after high school graduation. Yes, we got into your typical childhood trouble probably more than most, but, we probably had more fun also. I thought we were indestructible, till now. This is a huge downer for me and likewise to all Bill's friends he made after his move 'down south'. Also to you, Susan, Bill was a lucky man to have met you. It was so great you guys could come up for my daughters wedding to surprise me. Rest in peace my friend!!

Dan Tews - West Bend, WI - Best friends growing up - May 13, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Many situations have seemed terribly unfair to me, but Carl's recent trials and death are probably the most painful examples I can think of. What an exceptional person in so many respects -- always took good care of himself, always was careful about what he ate, made it past his 60th birthday without ever using a single day of sick leave (and that's not only in Oak Ridge!), always seemed happy to drop what he was doing and help you on a problem and then would be remarkably patient while you were being dense, made important contributions to our national security by his own accomplishments and his support of others, would take an especially difficult or important challenge and wrestle it to the ground in his own methodical and meticulous way without worrying much about overtime or charge numbers, did not hesitate to use low-tech solutions when they made the most sense -- I could go on for pages. Some of the most gratifying hours of my career were spent with Carl and a handful of colored markers in front of a whiteboard, grappling with a technical issue (or a retirement-planning decision or a political conundrum).

And what a sense of humor! Sometimes, when he would say something hilarious, I'd have to replay it in my mind to make sure it really was funny because there would be no hint of a grin on his face. Good times!

It's always tragic when a fine person dies so young, and we're always sad when we lose a good friend. One of the things that grieves me most in this case is that he and Susan will not be able to experience even a few years together in their Florida dream home. Not many topics could bring an emotional expression to Carl's stoic face, but it would really light up when he was telling someone about the features and quality of the house's construction or when he was sharing photos or explaining about the fresh-water canal just beyond the lanai. Just plain heartbreaking . . .

So long, Carl. It was a blessing and a privilege to know you.nkwhW

Andy Andrews - Oak Ridge, TN - co-worker - May 10, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Although many of us at Trinity did not know Carl personally, we have Don and Edna Sherrow (parents of Susan) in our church. Knowing their love for the Lord and their deep commitment to their son in law and daughter, we are deeply saddened by Carl's passing, but know he is with his Lord and Savior. Believing that we will all be together again, may the days ahead be filled with sweet memories of Carl and the joy and love he brought to so many.

Your Family of Friends at Trinity United Methodist Church, Fort Walton Beach, Florida

**Marilyn Horton - Ft Walton Beach, GA - friend of family** - May 10, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ So sorry about Carl. He has to be one of the nicest guys that I have ever worked with. He was so patient when explaining things. I loved his smile and his demeanor.

**Lisa Thompson - Knoxville, TN - Co-worker** - May 08, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Dear Susan,

I was greatly saddened to learn of Carl's untimely death. I am very sorry about this. Please accept my deepest expression of sympathy over this huge loss for you.

Steven DeGangi

**Steven DeGangi - Peterson, IA - Friend of Carl and Susan** - May 08, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Susan, I am so sorry for your loss. I always enjoyed working and talking with Carl. We spent many hours working together getting ready for and conducting tests at the White Sands Missile Range. Carl always had the "can do" attitude. He will be greatly missed.

**Dwight Clayton - Knoxville, TN - Co-worker/friend** - May 07, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ My love and sympathy to you Susan.

**Peggy Harmon - Platte City, MO - cousin by marriage** - May 07, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ susan, i'm extremely sad for your lose. if there is anything susan & I can do please contact us. I worked with carl on several projects over the years and thought carl was the smartest guy I ever met. he knew so much about technical things in many different fields. he could walk up to a new device and have it completely figured out in minutes which amazed me. we always could joke around and have fun with each other. working with him was fun. he had a lot to do with my last five years on the southridge project. we loved to talk about our hobbies and interests. he went to a big streetrod show with me and almost got into that hobby also. what a great person he was and this is very hard to take, losing him so early, but the memories will help somewhat.

John Turner - clinton, TN - good friend & co-worker - May 07, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Susan, Sincerest sympathy in your time of loss. He was a great guy who will be missed greatly. His pain is over and is in a better place. Strength and courage to you as you go forward. Thom

Thom Taylor - May 07, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Susan - so sorry to hear the news of Carl's passing. Thinking if you during this sad time.

Mary Jayne Long - Brandon, FL - Co-worker - May 07, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Carl was a fantastic Guy and a Good friend. I really enjoyed working with Carl. It was always a pleasure to be in his company. I will miss Carl. Joe Cunningham.

Joe P Cunningham - Oak Ridge, TN - Friend and coworker - May 06, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Carl and I spent hundreds of hours together scuba diving, cave diving, training, flying airplanes, boating, vacationing, and working in Oak Ridge. We had so many extended discussions, often on long trips, both light hearted and deeply serious. I loved Carl's sense of humor, his keen intelligence, his creativity, his analytical skills, his wizardry with electronics, his critical attention to detail, and his moral sense of what was right. Carl will be missed so much by so many.

John K. Jordan - Friend - May 06, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ I worked with Carl on and off for over 20 years. His ready smile and sharp wit made working with him a pleasure. I will miss him greatly.

**Blake Van Hoy - Greenback, TN - friend** - May 06, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ Susan, I am so sorry for your significant loss. Carl was a very fine man. I enjoyed his sweet smile And greatly respected his expertise! My thoughts and prayers are with you. Your friend, Oneta

**Oneta Fioravanti - Sweetwater, TN - Friend** - May 06, 2014 at 12:00 AM

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“ I knew Carl for over 30 years. My first time leaving the ground in an airplane was with him in a Cessna 150. We flew out of the Oliver Springs airport. We worked together, laughed together, ate pizza together, and had very few disagreements. He was very respectful and encouraging. He loved life and we will miss him. Great guy, great friend. So blessed to have known him.

**Larry Seiber - Oak Ridge, TN - Good Friend** - May 05, 2014 at 12:00 AM