

On Saturday, August 13, Lester (Les) LaFountain passed away at his home in Monrovia, California at the age of 79. Les was born and grew up in Marinette, Wisconsin with a passion for the outdoors. He learned to hunt and navigate the wilderness at a young age and spent a lot of time exploring the woods around Marinette and Peshtigo Harbor. After graduating from Marinette High School in 1960, he attended the University of Wisconsin at Madison and graduated with B.S. and M.S. degrees in Geology. He continued his education at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and earned a Ph.D. in Structural Geology in 1973. Outside of his academic accomplishments he was an Eagle Scout, held a pilot's license, and was certified to sail on ocean waters.



In 1964 Les married Susan Hansen, also a Marinette native. They lived in many cities throughout the United States with Les working at various environmental engineering firms. In 1984 they had a son Adam who Les taught to camp, mountain bike, operate a boat, launch model rockets in the desert, and many other useful outdoor skills. Les was also a mentor to Adam in many aspects of business, teaching him negotiation and professionalism. In 2020, Les welcomed his grandson Emiliano, who he was able to spend quality time with before his passing. Like Les, Emiliano loves rocks which made Les very happy. He loved his family and took great pride in his son and grandson.

Les had a fabled career that took him around the globe and allowed the quirks of his personality to leave an impression on many people. As a geologist during the advent of nuclear energy, he spent time working on projects throughout Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia. Many of his former colleagues have wild tales of times in the middle of nowhere with no GPS or phone, catching flights to opposite sides of the earth with minutes to spare, driving overnight across countries to a business meeting, or hastily negotiating their way out of tough situations. He had a tenacity for detail and making sure things were done right. That was matched with a high degree of cynicism and wit which in some cases drove his loved ones and colleagues nuts and in other cases was hilarious.

Later in his career he managed environmental sites and was a consultant in California. After nearly 40 years, in 2013 Les retired in Monrovia where Sue and Les had raised Adam. It was difficult to keep Les still and very shortly after retiring the two booked a river cruise down the Nile River since Les had always wanted to see the Pyramids of Egypt. River cruises for the two became something they loved doing together and would extensively plan, and look forward to, doing as many as they could each year.

In March of this year, Les was diagnosed with metastatic pancreatic cancer. For several months he spent time doing the things he enjoyed such as woodworking projects, walking his

dog Sox, and spending time with family. His final weeks were spent in the care of his family at home. He is survived by his wife Susan LaFountain, son Adam (Andrea) LaFountain, grandson Emiliano LaFountain, and brother-in-law Steven (Debby) Hansen. He was preceded in death by his parents, Lester and Gertrude (Loose) LaFountain.

Les will be remembered by many and his family will miss him deeply.