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Smokejumper Obituary: Mansfield, Charles R. (Cave Junction 1959)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Mansfield, Charles R. (Cave Junction 1959)

Chuck died October 6, 2017. After getting his Ph.D., he was hired by NASA where he worked from 1969 to 1973 at the Space Optics branch at the Johnson Space Center. Chuck and his partner worked on an optical instrument for the Hubble Telescope.

In 1973 he accepted a position to work for the Los Alamos National Laboratory. From 1978-88, Chuck served as project leader for the Antares and Aurora Laser Systems - the Antares Laser was the largest carbon dioxide laser ever built. He then continued to work on the "Star Wars" laser defense program and retired in 1993.

After retirement he earned his private pilot's license and started three businesses: Coyote Aviation, Coyote Aerospace, and Coyote Tales Publishing. Chuck was a founding member of the Los Alamos Retiree group and its president until last year. Over his career he published 37 scientific papers and co-authored 18 patents.

Chuck jumped at Cave Junction 1959-69. Due to the heavy timber and high Madrone in the CJ jump country, it was often difficult to find the climbing spurs and cargo after being dropped to the jumpers. In a preview of his scientific career, Chuck took used peach cans from the Messhall and attached a buzzer system inside the cans. The "Mansfield Buzzer" was then attached to the cargo and the buzzer activated just before being kicked out the door. Many a Gobi jumper found their cargo as they followed the sound of the "Mansfield Buzzer."

(end of excerpt)