

Saratoga, California



Daniel M. Tellep, retired Chairman and CEO of the Lockheed Martin Corporation, and longtime resident of Saratoga, CA, passed peacefully at home with family and loved ones at his side on 26 November 2020. He was 89. Born 20 November 1931 to immigrant parents in Forest City, PA, a small coal mining town, his family later relocated to San Diego, CA during the Great Depression. Dan came from humble beginnings and attributed his fulfillment and success in life to his parents, Mary and John, who instilled in him a devotion to family, an ethic of hard work, the value of education and the importance of kindness to others.

Dan attended the University of California at Berkeley graduating summa cum laude with a degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1954 and then earned his Master of Science degree the following year. He credited his professors at Berkeley for a transformative opening of his mind to the "elegance of mathematics and equations". Then in 1971, he completed advanced management studies at Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration.

Dan's remarkable 43-year career in the aerospace industry began in 1955 when he joined the ranks of the newly formed Lockheed Missiles & Space Company as a principal scientist and 200th employee in an abandoned hangar in Van Nuys, CA, working on re-entry technology. In 1957 the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, provoking an aerospace competition with the U.S. and fueling a wave of innovation and growth in the industry. Ultimately, Lockheed Missiles and Space Company grew to 30,000 employees and Dan was named president in 1984. In 1989, he was selected to lead Lockheed Corporation as CEO and Chairman.

In an era of shrinking defense budgets, Dan was the first to propose a merger between Lockheed Corporation and Martin Marietta recognizing that a combined company would be stronger. The merger, known as the "merger of equals" created the world's largest defense company. Dan became Lockheed Martin's first Chairman and CEO in 1995. He served as CEO for nine months, then remained as Chairman until 1998.

Outside of work, Dan was an accomplished pilot, watercolorist, runner, hiker, writer, traveler and all-around great family man and friend. His family will miss his unique talent for function and elegance in design – whether embodied in a hand-built painter's easel, an organizational project for his workshop/studio, a children's playhouse, backyard garden landscape or medieval sandcastle built with his grandchildren at Carmel River Beach. Dan's daughters and their neighborhood friends from the Sixties will especially miss his homemade rockets and fireworks on the Fourth of July, Blue Angel airshows at Moffet Field, and weekend outings to the neighborhood school fields chasing after his occasionally wayward radio-controlled model airplanes.

He is survived by his four daughters, Teresa Tellep, Mary Tellep, Susan Tellep (Cindy) and Patricia Axelrod (Mark); his first wife, Margaret Lewis; two stepdaughters from his second marriage, Chris Chatwell (May) and Anne Bossange (Kent); grandchildren Vanessa Daniele, Rachel Nichting (Mark), Benjamin Axelrod (Torey), Samantha Gordon (Casey), Nathan Axelrod, Lynn Bossange (Lou) and Kate Macias (David); great-grandchildren Taylor, Reed, Katherine Grace, Evelyn and Sonny; and longtime family friend and devoted caregiver, Martha Chacon and family. He is predeceased by his parents Mary and John Tellep, brother Michael, and second wife Patricia Taylor Baumgardner.