



Theodore "Ted" Edmond Bourque

December 24, 1929 - November 3, 2012

Ted Bourque, Long Time Norwalk, CT Resident, NHS '47.
Retired to Menard, TX, 1998.

Where to begin? For those of you who had the pleasure and honor to know my Dad, Theodore Edmond Bourque (Ted, and Teddy to his younger friends) I need say no more; other than he died in my arms on Saturday November 3, 2012 in his log cabin that he built with his own two hands at the spry age of 70, in the Hill Country of central Texas.

But to begin at the beginning, Ted grew up in Norwalk Connecticut, went to Roger Ludlow Junior High and graduated Norwalk High school in 1947. Luckily, I was able to benefit from some of the same outstanding teachers he had in the Norwalk school system. Given the uncommon spelling of our name, I was always confronted with two reputations to which I had to live up and down. I'm told he excelled academically while also having something of a "wild side". These wonderful teachers developed a mind so sharp and creative, that for the rest of his life, all his bosses, colleagues and employees have called him brilliant. He has at least 3 patents on jet engine design from GE (but that's jumping ahead).

After High School, lacking direction, he enlisted in the newly formed U.S. Air Force and became a crew chief on our first jet fighter aircraft, the Lockheed P-

80 Shooting Star. While stationed in Japan, the Korean War broke out and he was promptly re-deployed to one of the earlier air bases there. There are a number of colorful "war stories" I'd love to share, that define the essence of his adventurous personality, but perhaps you'll call me to hear them.

After his Honorable Discharge he came home to court his childhood sweetheart, my Mom, who spent her childhood summers growing up across the street from him on the Blackstone farm lands sticking out into Norwalk Harbor. Before marriage was even considered, college education was a prerequisite, specifically a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Columbia University, from which he graduated in 1956, holding me in his arms on the steps of the School of Engineering. Many years later, I held him in my arms when I graduated from Southampton. From there, it was on to a career in defense contract work; first for GE on jet engine design and then on to 2 other major defense contractors, Condec Corp. and UMC Corp., where he served as Vice President of Engineering for both.

After losing his wife Vivian (my Mom) in '82 to cancer, he sold the family home, bought a 52 ft. sailing ketch and retired (for the first time) to the Virgin Islands to run a sailing/diving charter business. Sadly, his old boss called him back to take over the Engineering Dept. for a second defense contractor. Fortunately he was able to use what little free time he had to restore a 1959 Chevy Impala Convertible (our first new car back in '59) to showroom condition. One last engineering challenge brought Ted to Houston, Texas to build Mercedes buses for Stewart & Stevenson, used by numerous cities across the U.S. Finally he finished his long rewarding career developing prototype fuel cells for the Dept. of Energy.

And that brings us here - Menard, Texas. We built our home together (no subcontractors, just us). A 4 bedroom 2000 sq.ft, log cabin on a hundred acres. With a heard of White Tail exceeding two dozen, armadillos, horny

toads, road runners, wild turkeys, and a rattle snake every now and then, it's a far cry from the third of an acre in Norwalk backing onto I-95, but we like it. Too peaceful though, so Ted promptly left in an RV to visit all the National Parks west of the Mississippi. So I sent him a digital camera and tripod and taught him landscape photography from the rims of the Grand and Bryce Canyons - OVER THE PHONE! His work is breathtaking and a demonstration of the artistic beauty buried in that genius analytical mind for so long. Fortunately I have a large format printer to display his many awesome panoramic landscapes for years to come.

With many places still to see, and needing a scooter to get around, Ted came home for a hip replacement. Tragically, a blood clot from the surgery caused a massive stroke that reshaped his remaining years. But with infinite drive and the never ending perseverance within him, he clawed his way out of rehab only slightly less capable. He even learned to drive our tractor and at the slightly less spry old age of 80, the two of us cleared the all Mesquite, Prickly Pear, and Algerita for 2 miles of trails all over our ranch.

Lastly, I want to share sentiments from many friends, family, and coworkers: Ted was the rock. When it came to work, there's only one word to describe Ted - he was a machine. For him there was only one way to get the job done - the right way. No short cuts, no shooting from the hip, it was always "plan your work and work your plan". Even before Apollo 13, for Ted "failure is not an option". My Dad was always the "go to" guy. You had a problem, he showed you how to fix it. Compassionate, but unemotional, practical solutions to whatever tragedies would fall. He was the last true gentleman I've known; when I started dating he was sternly adamant - you always hold open the door for a lady, you always walk her all the way to the door, and he was absolutely insistent - ladies don't clean toilets in our household; he did.

There are so many incredible stories - from sailing through Hurricane Josephine 600 miles out in the Atlantic, to tracking down a long lost cousin when my uncle was dying. I thank God for my Dad, and I thank my Dad for every day of the most wonderful life I (or anyone) could ever hope for. He was the smartest man I'll ever know. Being the second smartest, I know this for an absolute fact.

I would love to share more. If you knew my Dad, Ted, Teddy, and want to hear or share more stories, please get in touch or visit. There's plenty of room here, and Middle Ranch is, as its name implies, in the middle of nowhere - plenty of nature, peace, and quiet to reminisce.

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Tribute Wall

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“ *Bill and I met Ted and Ken in the late 90's. Ted was a kind gentleman that soon took off on a trip. He was helpful when we needed a hand working on a barn that soon became a cabin on Middle Road in Menard. He always had a smile when you knocked on the door. And welcome you always felt. We miss him dearly and know that Ken misses him even more. No worries Ted. We shall be keeping company.*

Bill and Debbie Mitchell - December 02, 2012 at 07:42 PM

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“ *My condolences to the friends and family of Ted Bourque.*

Some years ago I had the pleasure to work with Ted Bourque while employed by Stewart and Stevenson in Houston TX.

Ted was the project manager and therefore my boss on all the projects I was assigned to.

The first thing you learned when working on projects with Ted was: "There was only one way to do things and that was the right way".

He was a very detail oriented engineer. Ted never excepted anything as fact. He would work equations forward and backward to ensure the answers made sense.

Over the years Ted seemed to become the "go to man" for some of the company's engineering problems. He also became an asset on several legal issues the company was involved with at the time.

Ted was from the old school when it came to engineering practices, However, I was always amazed at how well he adapted to modern technology, ie: computers, etc. I think he showed up one day with

the first lap top computers I had ever seen. I know I was very jealous!

I personally learned a lot from Ted which in return has been immensely helpful to me in my career as a mechanical Designer.

I am truly grateful to have known Ted and am glad to have had him and Ken as a friends for many years.

Yours Truly :

Douglas McElroy

Douglas McElroy - November 21, 2012 at 12:41 PM