

Alfred Skolnick

Capt. Alfred Skolnick, US Navy (Ret), 95, of Arlington, VA, passed away at home on October 16, 2025 with his wife Sally and daughter Susan at his side. A resident of Arlington for over 50 years, he was a leader in the development of defense systems at the cutting edge of technology. From deep submergence systems to demonstrating fleet defense with the most powerful lasers in the world, his work provided the data which guided our nation's critical acquisition decisions.

Al was born in New York City to Sam and Flo Skolnick on August 15, 1930. He attended the esteemed Brooklyn Technical High School, and earned degrees through PhD in mathematics, economics and electrical/aeronautical engineering from Queens College, Columbia University, The Naval Postgraduate School and the Polytechnic Institute of New York University. He married Sara Hatcher on June 8, 1957 in Washington DC.

An engineering duty officer for most of his 31-year Navy career, he rose through a progression of assignments culminating with leadership of the most successful demonstration of High Energy Laser capability in the free world. After the Navy he continued as a consultant providing advice on a variety of programs.

Throughout his career he contributed to the strength of his profession: 40 years of adjunct professorship at Virginia schools; two terms as President of the American Society of Naval Engineers where he brought a focus on combat systems and led a recruitment drive that let ASNE reach its highest membership, and a beloved mentor to young engineers and students, many of whom credited him for advancing their careers, and elevating their ability to frame and solve problems.

Al attained an unparalleled record of excellence and was recognized by many awards including the Legion of Merit, the ASNE Gold Medal and Solberg awards, Navy League Parsons Award, NDIA Gold Medal, DC Council of Engineering and Architectural Societies Engineer of the Year, He was a fellow of the Directed Energy Professional Society, a member of Sigma XI and of the Cosmos Club, and chairman of the board at his daughter's Tibetan Buddhist monastery.

Al was known for his sense of humor and energetic personality. He had many friends of all ages and persuasions whom he loved to engage in discussion and debate. He was truly a force of nature who will be missed by all who loved him.

Al is survived by his wife Sara Skolnick, his son David and daughter Susan (Lama Jamdron).