

2018 HOF Inductee

Stephen P. Cortright - Po-Hi Class of 1959

Stephen Phelps Cortright was born in Ponca City, OK on March 26, 1941 to Austin and Marjorie Cortright. Steve and his sister, Shari (Cortright) Dean attended Ponca City schools with Shari graduating Po-Hi class of '54 and Steve with the Po-Hi Class of '59. Steve's active and adventurous spirit led him to make several trips to Philmont Scouting Ranch in New Mexico while completing his requirements for both the Eagle Scout and God and Country Awards. While attending Oklahoma State University Steve joined Sigma Chi social fraternity and graduated in 1963 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business.

Steve's interest in the military was sparked listening to stories from immediate family members serving throughout the world with the Air Force and Navy as fighter pilots. Upon joining the Air Force and completing undergraduate pilot training at Webb AFB, TX, Steve proceeded to his first flying assignment in Toul-Rosieres AB, France flying the RF4C fighter, reconnaissance aircraft. Approximately 18 months later French President de Gaulle directed all American forces to immediately depart France and Steve's flying unit was ordered to proceed directly to Vietnam for combat duty. While in Vietnam Steve flew 217 combat missions, was awarded 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 13 Combat Air Medals.

Following the end of the Vietnam War, Steve left active duty and returned to Oklahoma, graduating from the University of Tulsa Law School with a Juris Doctor and practicing law in Tulsa. He continued his military career with the Air National Guard as the Operations Officer then Commander of the Tactical Fighter Squadron and later the Commander of the 138th Fighter Wing leading several European joint training exercises with NATO Forces. From 1988 to 1992, he was appointed Brigadier General as the Commander of the Oklahoma Air National Guard and in 1992 promoted to Major General while assigned as the Air National Guard Assistant to the Commander, Pacific Air Forces stationed at Hickam AFB in Hawaii. He is a command pilot with over 5000 hours of military flying time in the T-33, T-37, T-38, RF-4C, F100D, A-7D, F-16C aircraft.

On April 1, 1995 Steve was appointed to serve as the Adjutant General of Oklahoma under Governor Frank Keating. On Monday, April 17th Steve briefed Keating on his chief executive duties and responsibilities as governor should the state encounter a natural or manmade disaster. Two days later, on April 19th the Murrah Federal Building was bombed, killing 168 people and injuring over 600 others. At the time, this bombing was the worst national domestic terrorism event for our country, and Governor Keating's team, leading Oklahoma's response, was recognized as establishing the national standard for inter-agency cooperation of local, state and federal agencies in response to a national disaster.

Upon his retirement from the Air Force in 2003 Steve was appointed the Federal Security Director for TSA following the September 11, 2002 New York City Trade Center terrorism attack with security responsibilities in eastern Oklahoma and later statewide for all modes of interstate transportation to include airports, pipelines, waterway ports, highways and railroads until his retirement in 2016.

Steve was married to Betty Albin from 1963 to 1970 and they had 1 child David Cortright. Steve was married to Barbara Coleman Cortright from 1974 until her sudden passing in March 2016. Their children Tiffany Horton, Heather Luckinbill and Adam Cortright. Steve currently lives in Tulsa and stays busy traveling to visit his 11 grandchildren Travis, Bailey, Olivia, Jojo, Stockton, Hope, Madison, Jackson, Caroline, Louis, and Charlotte in Raleigh, NC, Austin, TX and Tulsa, OK.

Major Awards and Decorations include: Air Force Distinguished Service Legion of Merit

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Medals