



Captain Karl Pretsch

January 25, 1953 - September 14, 2025

Captain Karl Pretsch, 72, of Orlando, Florida, passed away on September 14, 2025, after a brief illness.

Karl was born on January 25, 1953, in Rockville Centre, New York, to Rudolph Bruno Pretsch and Marian Katherine Miller. He grew up in Carle Place, Long Island, where he developed a lifelong love of aviation.

Karl's family was the center of his life. He is survived by his wife, Kim Williams; his son, Kyle Pretsch; his brother and sister-in-law, Richard and Patricia Pretsch; and his niece and nephews, Richard, David, Michael, and Jennifer. His first wife, Theodora Pretsch, and his sisters, Phyllis Ober and Anne Parkin, preceded him in death.

Karl's passion for flying began with his uncle, Captain Ernie Pretsch of TWA, at Marathon Flight Services in Kissimmee, Florida. He began teaching throughout the East Coast, including in Warrenton, Virginia, where he met his first wife, Theodora ("Teddie"), and was based there for much of his career. Before joining the airline industry, he led safety training for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association.

In 1980, Karl joined US Air, beginning a distinguished 38-year career. Based primarily at Reagan National Airport, he became known among colleagues

and friends simply as “Captain Karl.” He retired in 2018 with 38 years of service at American Airlines. During his career, he met and flew with Kim Williams, his wife, a flight attendant based in Charlotte, NC. He will be remembered as a loving husband and father.

Throughout his career, Karl was admired for his skill in the cockpit and devotion to teaching and mentoring new pilots. He was qualified on multiple aircraft, including the Boeing 727, DC-9, Airbus 319/320/321, Airbus 330, and Gulfstream II. He also served as a Designated Pilot Examiner. After his time at American, Karl continued his passion for aviation education, concluding his career at Aerostar Aviation in Kissimmee —returning to mentoring future airline pilots and the area where his first flights and aviation career began.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Karl’s memory to Memorial Sloan Kettering, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, or the Allied Pilots Association Pilots Care Program.

Tribute Wall

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“ I flew out of DCA with Captain Karl many, many times after I started as a flight attendant at USAir in 1985 - what a super nice, wonderful guy! I recall lots of laughter on that old DC-9. Rest in peace, dear friend.

Teresa (Kirch) Carson - September 20, 2025 at 02:25 PM