



Per Kullstam

DEC 10, 1939 - APR 20, 2020



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Per Kullstam, Engineer and Innovator, Dies at age 80

Per Axel Kullstam, an influential and creative electrical engineer, who helped guide more than one big program in communications and related technologies, died on April 20, 2020 at his home in Cornelius, North Carolina from cancer.

Per regarded himself as both a lifetime student and a practitioner of engineering science. He spoke of teasing out the most vital parts of any complex problem, like building a satellite system, though it could be anything on any scale, so as to not waste resources by focusing on the less vital. With strong math, he drilled deep into subtle relations, yet he could describe their utility and trades in plain English to decision makers.

Born in Falun, Sweden 1939; he earned a MS at the Royal Technical Institute in Stockholm 1963, joining Ericsson Telefon. Crossing the Atlantic, he chanced to join Raytheon Company in Massachusetts in 1967. He later joined Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) in 1969, he then earned a PhD at Catholic University in Washington D.C. in 1977. His thesis on spread spectrum communications invoked enough math, he opined, to be worth a doctorate in that, as well. Not long after joining CSC, the immigrant became a naturalized citizen 1976, and established himself in communication theory circles. In 1984 he embarked on solo consulting to industry and government. Working with others as Paircom, his customers might find a box of fine pears at Christmas. He only fully retired by 2016.

Beyond technology, Per Kullstam was widely read in history, economics, philosophy, and theology. Other favorite activities were fixing antique clocks and referring to them as “his patients” and rowing in the Baltic Sea. In retirement he continued to travel, and spent many summers at their island home on Svartsö in Stockholm’s archipelago.



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Per and Stella were married 1965 in Vaxholm, Sweden. Lived in Boston area for couple of years 1967 to 1969. Moved to suburban Northern Virginia and resided there for 50 years, relocated to North Carolina in 2019.

He is survived by his wife of 54 years Stella Kullstam; sons, Johan Kullstam and wife Elizabeth Driscoll of Wayland, Massachusetts and granddaughters Rebecka and Sophia; Lars Kullstam and wife Susan and granddaughter Annika of Huntersville, North Carolina; brothers, Anders and Nils and their families in Sweden.

A private service will be held at a later date in Vaxholm, Sweden.

To commemorate and celebrate his life and would like give in Per's memory to our medical professional community to either Hospice & Palliative Care Charlotte Region or Atrium Healthcare Levine Cancer Institute.



Tribute Wall

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John Oetting posted:

I had the pleasure of working with Per over a significant portion of my 40 year career in military communications. Most recently, I worked with Per when I was at Johns Hopkins APL and he was a consultant to the Navy on the MUOS Program. The last time I saw him was when we both traveled to Cape Kennedy at our own expense to watch the launch of the MUOS I satellite. The countdown reached less than 30 seconds to launch when they had to abort. The satellite wasn't launched until eight days later, at which time I was on vacation in Costa Rica. Per was one of the most creative and talented engineers I've ever met. He was always a pleasure to work with, treated all of his colleagues with the utmost courtesy and respect, and maintained a great sense of humor at all times. He will be sorely missed. John Oetting, Columbia, MD.

February 19 at 7:09 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Per by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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