

## **DUANE NORMAN OF RAMONA**

Featured Speaker

Veterans Memorial Service, Nov. 11, 2019

Miramar National Cemetery

Duane Norman, 68, was born and raised in the Midwest, Independence Missouri, the home of Harry S Truman. At an early age he discovered what would become his lifelong passion, auto racing.

At age 13, he embarked on a racing career driving go-karts. At 17, while attending Truman high school, Mr. Norman was given an opportunity to race professionally for a Midwestern tire company driving a Sprint Car. At age 18, following graduation from high school, he enlisted in the United States Air Force Reserve, where he was trained as a medical services specialist.

At age 19, while pursuing his racing career and serving in the Air Force, Mr. Norman was injured in a racing accident resulting in a disabling spinal cord injury. As a quadriplegic, he realized both his racing and military experience would come to an end. Having no idea what to do next, his father suggested going to college until he figured it out. He was fortunate that his college experience would be paid for by the State of Missouri, due to his disability.

Mr. Norman graduated from the University of Missouri at Columbia, where he earned both undergraduate and graduate degrees in rehabilitation sciences. In 1978, upon completion of his education and internship at Cal State Berkeley, he moved to San Diego for the summer, and never left.

Mr. Norman was employed by Sharp Rehabilitation Center in the patient family services division, where he worked with comprehensive rehabilitation of patients with multiple diagnoses. His primary focus was the development of a cognitive reeducation program for addressing the recovery of brain-injured adults. He worked at Sharp for 10 years until he was once again sidelined due to a medical issue. Following his retirement from his second career, Mr. Norman started a medical equipment company, which is now run by his brother.

In the late 1990s, the racing bug struck again, and with the support of his very understanding wife, Felicia, he built a race car – a 1973 Datsun 510 – modified for him with a special transmission, hand controls, and a power steering system adapted to his needs. In 2000, the husband-wife team won the Sports Car Club of America championship for street-modified cars. Mr. Norman is the only disabled driver in the SCCA, and uses a wheelchair when he's not behind the wheel.

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## **PG. 2, DUANE NORMAN BIO**

Mr. Norman considers himself extremely lucky to have had the life he has experienced. One of four children born to amazing parents he was able to experience multiple adventures. He is extremely proud to be part of a legacy of service to this country, his father serving in the Navy in World War II, his older brother was injured in Vietnam in 1968, his sister worked 35 years for the Marine Corps, and his brother runs a business providing medical equipment to our veterans through the VA system.

Mr. Norman has proudly served on the Board of Directors for the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Cal Diego chapter since 1992. He has held the position of president of this organization for the past five years.

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