



## Fred Espenak Jr.

January 19, 1952 - June 1, 2025

Fred Espenak, Jr, of Portal passed away at home Sunday afternoon, June 1, 2025, at the age of 73. At his request no services are scheduled.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Kimmo Aarnio lit a candle in memory of Fred Espenak*



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**Kimmo Aarnio** - June 23, 2025 at 01:38 PM



“ *Fred was the finest individual I ever had the privilege to befriend! His knowledge of astronomical events was without equal. My wife daughter and I met him on a Halley's Comet cruise in 1986, which began a nearly 40 year relationship. I went on over 20 trips with him through the years, each spectacular and fulfilling. I had the privilege to meet Pat during that time and attended their marriage. I cannot begin to explain the sadness I have at his passing. I will make a donation in his honor to the Planetary Society, to help further his dedication to astronomy. I send my family's condolences to Pat and the rest of his family and friends!*

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**Ken Bertin** - June 06, 2025 at 12:09 PM

LM

“ I knew Fred for over 40 years. We met at Goddard, both working in the planetary science division. I was working on Voyager and I think Fred might have been working with Ted Kostiuk who was developing a heterodyn spectrometer for infrared studies of the planets. But Fred's true passion was eclipses. As an amateur astronomer, Fred was an absolute nut over Astrophysics refractors, really the gold standard in refracting telescopes. He had a small cement patio on the side of his house where he would do his observing from. One day, I found a note on my desk from Fred asking me to come down to his office. When I got there, he broke down in tears over the loss of his 1st wife. I think that kind of cemented our friendship. But of course, I also remember how happy and excited Fred was later in meeting Pat who would be his eclipse traveling companion for years to come. Soon, Fred retired from NASA and he and Pat moved to Arizona Sky Village in Portal AZ. I got to visit them there once; an entire community of astronomers! How perfect for Fred. After that, I would see Fred mostly at conferences (DPS or ALCon or...). We kept in touch by email, often when I had an eclipse or astrophotography question or as I was trying to set up interviews for an upcoming celestial event. I saw Fred last at the 2023 ALCon conference in Baton Rouge, LA where he was a key note speaker on, of course, eclipses.

*My thoughts and prayers are with Pat and everyone who knew and loved Fred.*

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**Lou Mayo** - June 06, 2025 at 12:38 AM

BA

“ To Fred's wife and family;

*Please accept my condolences of Fred's passing. Since Grammar School, Fred and I were neighbors as kids in Annandale on Staten Island, where we both first met at the Penny Candy store in Annandale village, buying a precious dimes worth of candy. We both were amateur astronomers. My family moved to the north end of Staten Island, and we lost contact until I met him once again at Wagner College as Physics majors. We went to the '72 and '73 eclipses. Working my way through college, Fred kept me balanced in the science end of my life so I kept an even keel forward. He was a great organizer, and was sharp as a tack! He was always a step ahead of me, always pulling me along!!! Fred kept going getting his Masters degree, while I stayed back with my Bachelors, and our lives separated from that point on. I was the spiritual man in the group and he was pure science. He was like a brother and good friend when we crossed life's path. I believe Fred achieved all his goals in life, and I thank God in knowing Mr. Eclipse. God and Jesus will nurture him.*

*Bruce Andrew Auchter*

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**Bruce Andrew Auchter** - June 04, 2025 at 08:09 PM



“ Frank Flem Wahl lit a candle in memory of Fred Espenak



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**Frank Flem Wahl** - June 04, 2025 at 09:13 AM