

Janis Vilcans...Littleton, worked on moon landing, space shuttle projects; 79

LITTLETON — Janis Vilcans, 79, a Littleton resident whose distinguished career in aerospace engineering included involvement in NASA projects for the first moon landing and the space shuttle, died Monday, Jan. 28, at Beth Israel-Deaconess Hospital in Boston. He was the husband of Aina (Pauls) Vilcans.

He was born in Rubzeti, Latvia on Sept. 16, 1922, a son of the late Solomon and Apalonia (Erts) Vilcans. He immigrated to Canada in 1948 and was married to his wife, Aina in 1949. He received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and two master's degrees from Northeastern University in Boston.

Mr. Vilcans, who had never retired and currently was a full-time employee of the U.S. Department of Transportation, began his career at General Electric Corp.'s Heavy Radar Division in Toronto as an electrical engineer. In 1959, he joined Raytheon Co.'s Research and Special Microwave Devices Division in Waltham. In 1966, he moved on to NASA's research center in Cambridge and his special assignments included being part of the initial

radar planning group for the Space Shuttle.

Mr. Vilcans joined the Department of Transportation in 1970 to work in the technical field of mid-air collision avoidance systems, along with a variety of sophisticated radar projects. His latest program included technical support for transition of ground radar to satellite surveillance support for the Safe Flight 21 program.

Mr. Vilcans also taught Information Theory at the former University of Lowell's Graduate School.

He was listed in *Jane's Who's Who in Aviation and Aerospace U.S. Editions*. He was awarded the NASA Apollo Achievement Award for being a Team Member for man's first landing on the moon, Apollo Mission. He also was awarded the Bronze Medal Director's Award from the Department of Transport for Space Based Air Guidance System in 1998.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two sons, Paul Vilcans of Carlisle and Peter Vilcans of Littleton; a brother, Peter Vilcans, who lives in Latvia; and three grandchildren, Michael, Megan and Kristen Vilcans.

VILCANS — Of Littleton, Janis Vilcans Jan. 28. Husband of Aina (Pauls) Vilcans of Littleton. Father of Paul Vilcans of Carlisle and Peter Vilcans of Littleton. Brother of Peter Vilcans of Latvia. Grandfather of Michael, Megan and Kristen Vilcans. Funeral from the Badger Funeral Home, Rt 2A/110, Littleton on Friday at 8 a.m. with a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Anne's Church, Littleton at 9 a.m. Visiting Hours will be Thursday, 2-4 and 7-9 p.m. Burial at Westlawn Cemetery, Littleton. Mr. Vilcans was an Electronics Engineer for the Department of Transportation.

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