

MATTHEWS, C. Frederick

Of Lexington, originally of Toronto. October 25, 2019 at age 96. Husband of the late Frances (Hood). Father of the late John Matthews and his wife Marilyn of CA, the late Susan Bell of NH, and William Matthews and his wife Deborah of Watertown. Grandfather of Jeffrey Matthews and Kevin Matthews and his wife Rhona, all of CA; and Laurie Bernard and her husband Jonathan and Brian Bell, all of NH. Great-grandfather of Matilyn, Kaitlyn, and Joseph Bernard of NH. Uncle, great-uncle and brother-in-law, including to a special sister-in-law, Anne Hood of Ontario.

Fred left college to serve in the Royal Canadian Air Force in WWII (he had his pilot's wings before his driver's license). After earning his degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of Toronto, he became a test pilot for AVRO Aircraft in Toronto, which built the first jetliner in North America. He was the Flight Engineer on the first commercial jet flight in the US, carrying mail from Chicago to New York in 1951. Howard Hughes was interested in buying the jetliner for TWA, which he owned at the time, and Fred and crew spent several weeks with him in CA conducting flight testing of the plane. He was recruited by NASA in 1959 where he was a Project Director for Project Mercury, NASA's first manned space program, working on the flights of Shepard, Grissom, and Glenn. He then joined RCA Aerospace Systems in Burlington, where he continued to work on space systems projects, including for the Apollo Program, until his retirement in 1991.

A Private Service has been held, with interment in Westview Cemetery, Lexington.