



NCMS Remembers Gabe Draguicevich

Gabe Draguicevich made a lasting impact on so many friends and colleagues. Below are just a few memories from NCMS/CTMA partners.

Chris Root, longtime colleague:

When I was setting out to build the NAVAIR's Advanced Aircraft Technology Team (AAT) at FRCSW in late 2008, my first goal was to expand our scanning and modeling capability, and I attended a reverse engineering and metrology conference event in Texas. I first saw Gabe present during a technical session, then later ran into him at the Verisurf Software exhibit booth; his technical prowess and people skills were evident. We hit it off immediately and I learned he previously lived in San Diego and played trombone in a local Ska band I was familiar with; during that brief encounter, he expressed an interest in getting back to Southern California, so I immediately put on my recruiting hat and ultimately convinced him that there was a spot waiting for him to help support the warfighter and bring the FRCSW kicking and screaming into the 21st century. He accepted the challenge and in less than a year he was a full-time member on the growing AAT team! With supportive leadership under FRCSW Commanding Officer, CAPT. Michael Kelly, the AAT obtained funds necessary to outfit a state-of-the-art advanced measurement and reverse engineering lab with equipment and software based on Gabe's specifications. He was then turned loose to train and mentor a crop of new engineering interns and worked with other NAVAIR subject matter experts to reimagine and redefine processes to support our engineering and production teams. It was around this time we began our collaborative relationship with NCMS and joined the Additive Manufacturing RARE Parts Team and a couple years later kicked off a "Digital Depot" demonstration program at FRCSW with NCMS and Siemens, using Teamcenter PLM Software. Through our collaborative and innovative relationship, we created a strong bond of trust and friendship that I'll forever cherish. In fact, I can't think of a week since he was hired on with the Navy in 2009 that we didn't have a conversation, either in person, by email or text; but the most real moments with Gabe involved sharing the "best pizza ever" at Filippi's in Little Italy on a Friday, duffing at NASNI's Sea and Air Golf course, or dreaming up new ideas at North Island's World Famous I-Bar with like-minded individuals to implement back at work to bring FRCSW into the 21st century! Fair Winds and Following Seas my friend.

Greg Kilchenstein, colleague, formerly from the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Materiel Readiness:

"Livin' the Dream!"

When I first met Gabe in 2009 at FRC-SW he was a brand new NAVAIR AAT hire with extensive industry experience and deep expertise in manufacturing operations. I was immediately impressed with Gabe's technical prowess, his ability to communicate complex concepts clearly and concisely to leadership, and with his passion to support the warfighter and maintainer. Gabe was a "prime mover" in NAVAIR's and FRC's advancement of digital engineering and sustainment and was largely responsible for the successful

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transformation from paper-based tech data-centric processes to modern product data management system-based manufacturing and sustainment execution across the vast COMFRC enterprise...a true culture-changing paradigm shift and herculean effort!! I remember our first meeting in 2010 when Gabe relayed his vision for innovation at FRC-SW. He explained his concept for an advanced metrology and reverse engineering lab to ultimately support his larger vision of establishing an Advanced Manufacturing Center, which could support not only COMFRC, but DOD sustainment writ large. It was inspirational to observe Gabe and track his progress toward achieving these lofty goals through the next 11 years of our professional and personal association. I always admired the way Gabe approached everything in his life—whether in his professional or his personal life, Gabe was always all-in! He would light up when discussing how proud he was of his family and always had cool stories involving football games and moto-cross adventures. I was also entranced by Gabe’s stories with his Ska-band and his passion for flying his aircraft. Lots of folks will say they are “Livin the Dream” when asked how they are doing—Gabe really was “Livin’ his Dream” and I will greatly miss him.

Debbie Lilu, NCMS vice president maintenance and sustainment, business development.

“When Gabe walked into a room, I always saw a sparkle in his eye. He was an inspiration to me with his vast knowledge of and passion for technology transition. Gabe brought extensive knowledge from his days with industry that he happily shared and he was the first person who would offer help and guidance when needed. I couldn’t have asked for a better, more active or more collaborative colleague. I will miss him each and every day!”