Flight Is ‘Fulfillment of a Dream’

Everyone was in high spirits that Monday morning when the bus rolled out from the church parking lot.

Jack and Katherine V., were among 52 senior adults from Green Street Baptist Church in High Point traveling to Branson, Mo., last May for a couple of days of fun at the glitzy family-friendly getaway.

It would be two days of travel each way.

The group, under the direction of Rev. Gene Philips, normally schedules two different trips a year.

About three hours short of Branson on the second day, the bus pulled into a rest stop. When Jack, a man in his late seventies, came down the steps, “he was stumbling,” Philips said. One of the members of the group was a nurse named June Edwards. “She said he’d had a light stroke.”

Once in Branson, Jack was taken to Skaggs Community Health Center.

“The doctor there was extremely helpful. We would call and get updates. Everyone was wonder-

ful,” said Philips.

The question that loomed was, how would Jack get home once he was discharged from the hospital? Though the stroke had caused no lasting damage and Jack was doing well, riding on the bus was not an option.

“We tried flights out of Springfield, but he would have to make connections, and the tickets were cost-prohibitive,” Philips explained.

It just so happened June’s son-in-law, Ron Gibson, was an Angel Flight pilot from North Carolina. She and her husband Herb, also on the trip, contacted Ron, who agreed to fly Jack home.

He flew them in his Cessna 182, stopping in Nashville where they rendezvoused with the Green Street group whose bus had also stopped over in Nashville, then resumed the trip home.

“It was providential, the way it all worked together,” said Phillips.

He went on to note that a highlight of the flight for Jack, who was himself a pilot and had even built a passenger plane, was having an opportunity to sit in the co-pilot’s seat, making the trip “even more miraculous.

“You’ll never know how thrilled he and Katherine were to get to fly with Angel Flight,” he said.

“To get back in a plane was the fulfillment of a dream.”

Keith Taylor Named Mid-Atlantic Pilot of the Year

As a dentist, Keith Taylor of Chapel Hill, N.C., has crowned many people, but now it is his turn to be “crowned” as Angel Flight Mid-Atlantic’s Pilot of the Year. The owner of a Cessna 182, Keith flew 29 missions in 2005. He was also chosen as Angel Flight North Carolina’s Pilot of the Year. Congratulations, Keith!

Next month we will publish all the names of our award-winning pilots in the region. Every Angel Flight pilot is as hero in our eyes.