

John William Hilt, 83, passed away on Thursday, December 17, 2020.

John is survived by his wife of 59 years, Adrienne A. Hilt; daughters, Shannon Hepner (Michael), Julie Hannink (John), Amy McGuire (Tim) and Megan Carter (Robert); brothers, Joseph Hilt and Thomas Hilt; and grandchildren, Caitlin, Molly, John and Charlie Hepner, Olivia and Will Hannink, Julia and Evan McGuire, and Clare, Katie and Matthew Carter. He was preceded in death by his father John Herbert Hilt, mother Delia Elizabeth Hilt and brother, David Michael Hilt.

Born in Webster, South Dakota John grew up on the family farm before leaving to attend the United States Naval Academy. He graduated in 1959 and furthered his education by earning a Masters in Operational Research from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California in 1969. He enjoyed a successful career in the US Navy as one of the first volunteers in Admiral Hyman Rickover's "Nuclear Navy". His service included two deployments during the Vietnam War, commissioning Chief Engineer of the USS Nimitz (CVN-68), and as Commanding Officer of three ships, including the USS South Carolina (CGN-37), a nuclear-powered guided missile cruiser. In 1986, after serving our country for 26 years, John retired from the Navy with the rank of Captain.

John's best friend and partner in life was his devoted wife Adrienne. They moved to Newport News in 1972 where they raised four daughters. His four girls, along with his 11 grandchildren, were his pride and joy. He was an avid golfer, gardener and sports enthusiast faithfully following the progress of his own alma mater (USNA) and his daughters' alma maters (Virginia Tech, UVA and NC State) plus his life long devotion to the St. Louis Cardinals. A member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church for 48 years, John's Catholic faith was the foundation of his life. He could be counted on to pray for those in need during his daily rosary. John's family takes comfort in the fact that he is at peace, breathing easily again, and has pride in his legacy as a servant to our nation, a patriarch, and a good friend and neighbor. We love and miss you Pop Pop.

The family wishes a private in-person Funeral Mass to be celebrated Wednesday, December 30, 2020 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church by Rev. Paul Lagco. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Our Lady of Mount Carmel School, 52 Harpersville Rd, Newport News VA 23601.

Bercesse Funeral and Cremation Traditions

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Hampton, VA 23666

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<https://www.rhaydensmith.com/obituary/john-hilt>