



Col. Joseph Robert "Bob" Kempton

September 27, 1938 - May 25, 2022

On May 25, 2022 Bob Kempton died. He was a handsome, charming, smart, loving, and funny man. He and his brother grew up in Greensboro, N.C. in a family that believed in faith and community. He learned business and managerial skills by working with his father Charlie, and much to her dismay as the Music Director at St. Benedict's, the main thing he learned from his mother Madolyn was a love of singing (especially Irish songs after a couple of beers).

Bob started his military career at Georgetown where he was the Commander of the Dowd Rifle Drill Team and then the Col./Commander of the AFROTC Unit there. He met Mimi (who he called "the love of his life") there and she should have guessed then that a military life (not one as a lawyer's wife) was in store.

Bob was an expert in the Communications/Electronics field. He was a great writer and public speaker and leader of men. Every squadron, group, and division he commanded won the Air Force Unit of the Year award. Some team building techniques he started were incorporated into training manuals for other units.

Bob was TDY a lot, especially with Specials Ops, and used to say he "had more tent time than any other Col. In the Air Force". His assignments took him all over the United States, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. He was a Combat Veteran in Vietnam. He said he was away so much that "Mimi raised

the boys". An exaggeration---especially because of the lessons he taught: do a thorough job (and then you can play); keep trying, you can always improve; if you want to play (a board game without an adult partner) then learn to read and count and know the rules; God, Country and family are the basis for a good life.

He retired after nearly 28 years of service and took the UF/IFAS course and became a Master Gardener. He propagated native plants, donated them and helped elementary school children start butterfly gardens near their classrooms . He especially liked bamboo and had fifteen different varieties. He loved his backyard gardens and fish ponds and gave tours of for other gardeners and clubs. He was an "all in" guy, and if you bought one of his Labs or Bull Mastiff pups you were assured of getting a high quality, socialized, great family dog.

Bob's faith was strong and he was a man of great integrity. He was a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus, a former Grand Knight, and a reader at the 8:00 Mass for years. He loved his wife, his four sons, their wives, his nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He enjoyed his family and old and new friends . Bob worked hard for fifteen years to slow down Parkinson's Disease and was very brave during his short and swift decline from cancer. He stayed alert with his "bad boy sense of humor" until the end, and was blessed to find final peace in his own home with the person he loved longest and best. He will be missed.

He is survived by: his wife of nearly 60 years Marian ("Mimi" Kaselinas); his four sons and their wives (Bobby and Rosalind of London, Steve and Janet of Sarasota, Jerry and Stephanie of Sarasota, Ted and Meagan of Tampa); his grandchildren (Beatrice, Natalie, Charlie, Jack, Alex, Kate, Elizabeth, Cole and Amelia); great-grandchildren (Eliza and Buddy); step-siblings (Linda, Donna and Ronnie); Sisters and Brother-in-laws (Cora, Nancy and Jim) and nieces and nephew.

A funeral mass will be held at St Thomas More Catholic Church on June 24, 2022 at 9:30 am with interment in the Sarasota National Cemetery at 12:30 pm.

In lieu of flowers please send donations to Parkinson Place, 5969 Cattleridge Blvd., Suite 100, Sarasota 34232.

Tribute Wall



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Col. Joseph Robert "Bob" Kempton.*



June 22, 2022 at 02:09 PM



“ *I was fortunate enough to meet "The Colonel" and Mimi when I sold them their home in Gulf Gate East. From then on when I would see him at Publix or any other place, my first reaction was to salute him as a superior officer and superior human being. My thoughts are with Mimi and the family. Gil(Sergeant) Schulze*

Gil Schulze - June 05, 2022 at 11:07 AM