



George "Butch" Kolf

December 21, 1944 - April 16, 2024

George S. Kolf

1944- 2024

After a life of service to family and friends, the community and his country, U.S. Navy Veteran George S. "Butch" Kolf set sail on his eternal journey Tuesday, April 16, 2024.

Before George discovered life at sea, he built his foundation on land. Born in the "Motor City" to his parents, the late Hazel and George Kolf, George grew up in Detroit, where he graduated from East Detroit High School in 1962 and attended Macomb Community College. As a self-described "blue collar kid with a lead foot," George moved full throttle into his young life whether it was running cross country in high school or nabbing the occasional speeding ticket. At only 17-years-old, George began working at Koltanbar on automotive body assembly machinery checking fixtures before he decided to enlist in the United States Navy in 1964.

George attended electrician school during his time in the Navy and earned an electrician apprentice qualification that contributed to the role he played on the now infamous aircraft carrier U.S.S. Forrestal. It was on his first day on the U.S.S. Forrestal that he met his lifelong best friend Frank "Red" Steele who ended up standing faithfully by his side many years later as he took his final breaths (alongside George's beloved bride of 54 years Marlene). During George's service in the Navy, he truly "seized the day" (his favorite saying being "Carpe Diem") as he witnessed many great sights and experiences,

including the Acropolis and the Parthenon in Greece; a bull fight in Barcelona, Spain; New York City life and so much more.

On July 29, 1967, the U.S.S. Forrestal where George was serving in the Navy experienced a severe fire while operating on Yankee Station off Vietnam that killed 134 Sailors and aviators, injured 161, and destroyed 21 aircraft (U.S Naval History and Command <<https://www.history.navy.mil/about-us/leadership/director/directors-corner/h-grams/h-gram-008/h-008-6.html>>). According to the U.S. Navy, this was (and remains) the second worst loss of life on a U.S. Navy ship since World War II. George blessedly survived this tragedy and was allowed to live out his legacy of service to others. It was during this time that George (unknowingly at the time) held a glucose bag for Senator John McCain, who was also serving on the ship and had sustained injuries in battle, because the carrier became limited in medical stanchions due to the fire. When George honorably completed his service in the Navy, he returned to Detroit where he met and married the love of his life Marlene in 1970. While building a family, he returned to his automotive roots and started his draftsmen career at the former Chrysler Company, before moving to General Motors, where he ultimately retired in April 2002.

While serving as a loving husband to Marlene and devoted father to his three sons Scott, Brian and Jeff, George continued his life of service as a volunteer with Winning Futures, a high school mentorship program; Beaumont Hospital and the Veteran's History Project. In 2006, he received the President's Volunteer Service Award by President George W. Bush, which honors the important role of volunteers in America's strength and national identity.

An avid collector of memorabilia and collectible trading cards (as evidenced by his very full and interesting basement), George enjoyed many hobbies, including bowling, dining out or watching movies with friends; listening to his "Doo Wop" and 1960s music (especially Motown) on his vintage jukebox, or in later years on his iPad; and coaching many youth soccer teams. While doing all these things, he nurtured a "sweet tooth" and was never one to turn away a good dessert especially his wife Marlene's home-made cream puffs. He was a

gifted speaker and loved telling stories to a crowd. Out of all his activities and accomplishments, though, nothing made him prouder than being a grandpa.

And George's strong faith in God gave him strength throughout his life, but especially at the end when he ultimately battled several major illnesses.

George was pre-deceased by his brother Bobby during early childhood. Left to carry on George's legacy of service and "Carpe Diem" spirit are his sons Scott (Jennifer) of Troy, MI, Brian (Melissa) of Clawson, MI and Jeff (Erin) of Utica, MI. Truly the "wind in his sails," were his beloved grandchildren Alexis and Ian; Andrew and Ella; and Emerson, Monroe and Lennon. Left with decades of memories are his sister-in-law, Sharon Dinello (Jack) of Macomb and his nephew Jack (Rosemary) and niece Lori.

George was also a loving "dog dad" to Tali, who stood faithfully by his bedside at the end of his life. The family will receive family and friends Friday, April 19, 2024, 2-9 p.m. with a Rosary at 7:00 p.m. at Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors, 8459 Hall Road (three blocks east of Van Dyke Avenue) Utica, MI. A Funeral Mass will be held Saturday, April 20, 2024, 10 a.m. at St. Kieran Church, 53600 Mound Rd, Shelby Township, MI. George will lay in state at the church the day of the service at 9:30-10 a.m. The family would like to extend a gracious thanks to all the staff at Beaumont Hospital (Troy), Fresenius Kidney Care Shelby Township Dialysis and Hospice of Michigan. Thank you for your loving care when George needed it most. Memorial tributes may be made to the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan, Inc., 1169 Oak Valley Drive, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108 ~ OR ~ St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 www.stjude.org/tribute. Please share a memory with his family at www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com

Cemetery Details

Cremation

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 19. 2:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Wm Sullivan and Son Funeral Home
8459 Hall Road
Utica, MI 48317
(586) 731-2411
utica@sullivanfh.com
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

Rosary

APR 19. 7:00 PM (ET)

Wm Sullivan and Son Funeral Home
8459 Hall Road
Utica, MI 48317
(586) 731-2411
utica@sullivanfh.com
<https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/>

Instate

APR 20. 9:30 AM - 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Kieran Catholic Church
53600 Mound Road
Shelby Township, MI 48316

Funeral Mass

APR **20**. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Kieran Catholic Church
53600 Mound Road
Shelby Township, MI 48316

Tribute Wall

SS

“ *Marlene and family I was just told today of Butch’s passing. We are so incredibly sad. We are very sorry we were unable to attend the service. You are in our thoughts and prayers*

Scott Smith - April 21, 2024 at 03:50 PM

JM

“ *Dear Marlene, Scott, and all the family: we were very saddened to learn of your loss. We always marveled at Butch's lifetime of helping others. We send our heartfelt condolences. May he rest in peace.*

*Marianne & John Maurer
Rochester Hills, MI*

John Maurer - April 20, 2024 at 08:24 AM



“ *Dear Marlene please except my sincere condolences 🙏 Your husband sounds like a wonderful kind and caring man. Blessings to you and your family. Dorothy Busch*

Dorothy Busch - April 20, 2024 at 08:19 AM

EH

“ *My condolences to Marlene and the entire Kolf family. I am grateful for Butch’s spirit of volunteerism as he interviewed me regarding my Vietnam experiences as part of the Veterans History Project. He made me feel comfortable which allowed me to tell my story. If not for Burch’s involvement I would not have participated. May he rest in peace.*

Ed Hall

Ed Hall - April 19, 2024 at 05:39 PM



“ Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet was purchased for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



April 19, 2024 at 12:11 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



April 19, 2024 at 11:06 AM



“ Saylor, Colleen, Norm, Irwins, Bentleys planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of George "Butch" Kolf.

Saylor, Colleen, Norm, Irwins, Bentleys - April 19, 2024 at 11:06 AM



“ The Divas: Sheila, Deb, Barb & Paula purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



The Divas: Sheila, Deb, Barb & Paula - April 19, 2024 at 10:22 AM

JS

“ Jeff Spring purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



Jeff Spring - April 19, 2024 at 08:37 AM

JS

“ Jeff Spring planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of George "Butch" Kolf.

Jeff Spring - April 19, 2024 at 08:37 AM



“ Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



April 19, 2024 at 08:01 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



April 18, 2024 at 11:19 PM

KR

“ Kelly Bugaj (Probert), Ron, and Ronnie planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of George "Butch" Kolf.

Kelly Bugaj (Probert), Ron, and Ronnie - April 18, 2024 at 11:19 PM

LD

“ Love, Paul and Kristi Donehue purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



Love, Paul and Kristi Donehue - April 18, 2024 at 08:00 PM

TF

“ The Whole Celestini Family purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



The Whole Celestini Family - April 18, 2024 at 06:22 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



April 18, 2024 at 06:16 PM

B“

“ Becky “Shade” planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of George "Butch" Kolf.

Becky “Shade” - April 18, 2024 at 06:16 PM

FS

“ Frances S. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of George "Butch" Kolf.

Frances S. - April 18, 2024 at 05:08 PM

TF

“ The Keucken Family purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



The Keucken Family - April 18, 2024 at 05:04 PM

RB

“ Rick & Rae Bye purchased the Pretty Please for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



Rick & Rae Bye - April 18, 2024 at 04:44 PM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.*



April 18, 2024 at 03:40 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.*



April 18, 2024 at 03:04 PM



“ *Close to 60 years I a mighty long time to know someone...loved his humor, devotion to his family and love of his country.. Butch wore Bob's sweaters the whole time Bob was in the service...raided his dresser..lol.. I was in high school first time I saw Butch in his sailor outfit.pretty handsome guy.. Hope you are telling jokes to St. Peter and saving a nice place for the rest of us...We miss you..love Bob and Rose*

R Garr - April 18, 2024 at 03:01 PM



“ *Love, The Patterson Family Xoxo purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.*



Love, The Patterson Family Xoxo - April 18, 2024 at 02:34 PM

LX

“ Love, The Patterson Family Xoxo planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of George "Butch" Kolf.

Love, The Patterson Family Xoxo - April 18, 2024 at 02:34 PM

BO

“ Brian, Tina, Luke and Jake Orlowski purchased the Divine Peace Bouquet for the family of George "Butch" Kolf.



Brian, Tina, Luke and Jake Orlowski - April 18, 2024 at 02:16 PM