

In Memory of **Joseph Francis Friend**

December 3, 1928 - January 1, 2016

Joseph "Joe" Francis Friend, LCDR USN ret.

On 1 Jan 2016, Joe passed away due to complications stemming from cancer at the age of 87 years. Claudia Wehdeking, his wife of 56 years, was present with him in their home.

Joe was born on December 3, 1928 in Fort Smith, Arkansas. He was the youngest child of Max Friend, Sr., and Katherine Burns. He was valedictorian of Little Rock Catholic High School's Class of 1946. He graduated from Villanova University in 1951 and was commissioned as an ensign in the US Navy, where he enjoyed a twenty-year career as a surface warfare and intelligence officer.

His time at sea as a naval officer was his greatest professional joy. He served on four ships: the destroyer USS Basilone, the minesweeper USS Waxbill (captain), the cargo ship USS Muliphen, and the helicopter carrier USS Guadalcanal (navigator). Interspersed into his surface naval career were two tours -- Frankfurt and Stockholm -- as a naval intelligence officer at the height of the Cold War. While stationed in Frankfurt, Germany in 1958, he met Claudia and married her in Garmisch-Partenkirchen on May 2, 1959. The highlight of his naval career was serving on the Guadalcanal during the recovery of the Gemini X astronauts in 1966. Upon retirement from the Navy, he took his family on an epic two-month camping tour of the US, a trip that infused each of his children with road stories and a yen for travel. His professional life took several turns in the seventies, but he always took comfort in his personal philosophy: How do you get what you want? Want what you get. One highlight of that time was his work with at-risk Baltimore youth under a program called Maryland Sea Services.

By the 80s, Joe found a home with the Maryland Department of Natural resources where he developed radio communications systems for state foresters. He was fond of saying: "I went from the seas to the trees."

Joe was a champion of community service. In the seventies he volunteered for the Soccer Association of Columbia and was a member of the Howard County Board of Parks and Recreation. His efforts there were later honored by his election to the Howard County Sports Hall of Fame in 2012. For over thirty years, he supported the local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and was honored by the State of Maryland as an "Unsung Hero" in 1987. For both Joe and Claudia's community efforts, then Howard County Executive Ken Ulman designated May 9, 2009 as Claudia and Joe Friend Day.

In the last decade of his life, one of his greatest joys was hiking weekly with his MIHA group of friends.

Genial, warm, witty, kind, disciplined, hardworking--Joe Friend's life serves as a beacon for humane values and kindness for all who knew him. He will be sorely missed but well remembered. Joe is survived by his wife Claudia and their four children: Kerstin Howarth (Tony), Larry (Maribeth), Greg, and Tim. He also had five grandchildren: Corey (Chloe), Christa, Carina, Kevin and Felicia and three great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to NAMI, the [American Cancer Society](#) or St. John's Catholic Church.

The family wishes to thank Dr. N. Koutrelakos, Dr. K. Wickramaratne, and Gilchrist Hospice for their first-rate care of Joe.

The Memorial Mass will be held on Monday, Jan. 11, noon, at St. John Catholic Church, Wilde Lake, Columbia, followed by a gathering.

www.dignitymemorial.com/www.witzkefuneralhomes.com

Memorial Mass

Monday, January 11, 2016 | 12:00 pm - 01:00 pm

St. John Catholic Church

10431 Twin Rivers Rd., Columbia, MD 21044

Driving Directions