



**Jack Edmund Gerke**

**Hilton: 4/4/46 - 3/19/17. In his hometown, Girard, OH, Jack was called "the all-American boy." Tall, blonde, and blue-eyed, he had the look. From Little League to the All County Football Team, he had the athleticism. Eagle Scout, Boys State Rep, band, Presbyterian Church, he had the activities. And, as class Valedictorian, he had the intelligence. Yet, part of Jack's appeal was his total lack of conceit. In fact, his quiet, unassuming manner belied his many accomplishments. Jack learned his work ethic and handyman skills from his dad Bill, owner of a TV repair business. His mother, Frances Woods Gerke, was a high school language teacher who imparted the importance of education.**

**Jack was a 1968 graduate of the USMA at West Point. The rigors of Ranger School and the fascination of flight school followed. A member of the Corps of Engineers, his assignment at Camp Drum was fortuitous because while there he began dating Mary-Ellen Hospers of Rochester. Jack served as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam. Stateside, he was assigned to Fort Knox, KY, as a company commander. Jack and M-E married in 1971 and spent a decade in the Bluegrass State.**

**Back in civilian life, Jack accepted an engineering position with Ford in Louisville. It was here son Steven was born in 1974. Daughter Samantha completed the family in 1979. Jack became involved in local politics and was elected to the town council of Keeneland and as mayor of Hickory Hill. He also enrolled in the Masters of Environmental Science program at U of L. As a home owner, he was truly a "Jack of all trades," excelling at carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work. He was slow, but he was a perfectionist. A devoted dad, he served as T-ball and basketball coaches. As Cub and Boy Scout leader, he accompanied Steven to Camp Massawepie and on troop field trips throughout the East. He cheered at Sam's soccer games and applauded at her concerts and recitals. His "two great kids" idolized their dad.**

**A job change brought the family to Rochester in 1980, where Jack's engineering career continued at Rochester Products/Delphi for over 30 years. Many called him "their best boss ever." As a manager, Jack was an outstanding mentor, promoting each employee's strengths. He delighted in playing on the company's Old Timers Softball League and earned a Masters in Science from RIT where he was elected to Tau Beta Pi, honorary engineering society. An ardent football fan, Jack grew up rooting for the Browns and then the Bills. He remained loyal, but**

became tired of "rebuilding years."

He will be forever missed and cherished by his wife Mary-Ellen. After 45 years of marriage they came to finish each other's sentences and read each other's minds, but fortunately did not come to look like each other nor like Lizzie, the family dog. They loved spending time on simple pleasures: bicycling along the Erie Canal path, walking Liz, doing home projects, playing word games. Their hobby was visiting state capitals, and they managed to complete their 50 capital quest. Jack's counsel will forever guide Steven, Sam, and her husband Steve Krajczynski. Their daughter Allison was Jack's rainbow for the past 19 months. How we wish Papa had remained in her life much longer. He was loved and respected by his sister, Dr. Alice Gerke McAfee and her husband Dr. Rich McAfee, his sister-in-law Jill Fennell and her husband Jim and his brother-in-law Mark Hospers. He was proud of his nieces and nephews, Ian, Cori, Dylan and Colette McAfee and Jaime Arthur and Katy Fennell.

Our family expresses heartfelt thanks to Aram Hezel, MD, Carol Lustig, NP and Laura Kent, RN for their kindness, compassion and competence. To honor Jack, consider a donation to the Wilmot Cancer Center designated for pancreatic cancer research.

A service in celebration of his life will be held on SATURDAY, MAY 20th at 10AM, St. Mark's Church, 54 Kuhn Rd., 14612.

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