



Robert Francis Hilpert

August 21, 1935 - February 4, 2016

Robert “Bob” Hilpert, a long-time resident of Bellingham, WA since 1984, passed away on February 4th, 2016 at age of 80. He was born to Edwin and Christine Hilpert of Rochelle Park, NJ. Bob was surrounded by his loving wife of 51 years, Karen Frances Hilpert, as well as their children and their families; daughter Deborah Sunderland (husband Neil) of Seattle, WA, son Kevin (wife Shannon) and grandson Connor of Bellevue, WA, daughter Katrina of Bellingham, WA, and son Clint (wife Shayla) and grandsons Robert II and Ulysses of Eureka, MT. He was survived by his brother Edwin Hilpert (wife Carol) of Round Rock, TX, sister Christine Bein (husband George) of Sedona, AZ, and Barbara Green (husband Robert) of Seabrook, TX.

Bob completed his Bachelors of Marine Science at Maine Maritime Academy (Castine, ME) in 1957. He travelled extensively as a Midshipman throughout the Middle East during his studies. In 1958, he joined the US Navy, deployed throughout East Asia and was honorably discharged in 1961 with the rank of Lieutenant Junior Grade. That same year he started his career in foreign trade, working at International Minerals and Chemical Corporation, Overseas Marine Services, Pacificana Trading Company, International Chemical Trading Company, and finally at the Port of Bellingham. Bob and his family lived in New York, NY, Skokie, IL, Vancouver, BC, Hong Kong, BCC, Tulsa, OK, and finally Bellingham. His work brought him to nearly 75 countries in his lifetime. He retired in 1997 from Port of Bellingham where he served as the Director of

Marine Terminals and Director of Economic Development and Vice President of a Foreign Trade Zone at the Bellingham Airport. Additionally, as a patriot duty, Robert worked as a “stringer” with the Central Intelligence Agency throughout his years abroad.

Bob had a witty sense of humor coming from his Irish upbringing in Hell’s Kitchen in New York City, always telling jokes and discussing politics, culture, and world events. He had an affinity for travel, going on long “country drives,” fishing with his children, and boating with the family. He had a deep love for bagpipes, his patriotic duty to America (Go Navy!), God, and his family and friends. His generous nature touched many lives with his storytelling abilities and through his desire to talk to people of their travels.

Bob and Karen are members of Trinity Lutheran Church. There will be a celebration of life service at Trinity and gathering at the Grace Center on Saturday February 20, 2016 at 11 am located at 119 Texas Street, Bellingham, WA 98225.

Tribute Wall

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“ I hired Bob when I was the Executive Director at the Port of Bellingham. As a Trader he was the perfect person for the Director of Trade Development as he knew and had traveled throughout Asia which was our market. His keen knowledge of the asian customs and wonderful sense of humor helped secure a substantial amount of cargo for our Port.

I enjoyed traveling with Bob as he was incredibly precise with our schedules and always enjoyed a good meal, which in Asia can at times be a surprise! With his grasp of the Port of Bellingham's cargo attributes he filled the docks with a variety of cargoes. His keen sense of strategy helped set up our Foreign Trade Zone in an industrial park in the town of Sumas.

I will always remember Bob for his kindness; his willingness to help others; his keen sense of humor; his extensive homework on any project his was asked to work on; his concise reports, and most of all his ability to make things happen!

Don Fleming - February 04, 2016 at 12:00 AM

KH

“ Dear Papa...

How do I say goodbye to you, been trying to wrap my head around it. Of course, I knew you were sick, tried to bury that fact. I thought you had a lot of time with us still; if we worked hard enough, we would overcome. Still stunned...

You were not only my father, guiding me, but one of my closest confidants. As much as you didn't like hearing about my escapades (I know they frightened you), you tolerated them. You always told me that you respected my time in the mountains, understood it was where I found my spiritual connection and grounding force in life. I guess now you get to be part of that. I hope you celebrate from mountain tops with me, see my views, experience the beauty in my journeys (as I got my travel bug from you). So, I suppose there is that, a beautiful thought that I pray is true. But, what do I do with the loss I feel? How do I come to a peaceful conclusion at the end of this? I feel such a huge range of emotions...profound sadness, guilt (could I have done more), regret (did I always have to be working through a to-do list instead of smelling the roses), numb, slightly angry (though I still don't know who I am angry at). I also know that I love you. And, I feel so much happiness with just that simple feeling. How lucky was I to have such a strong supporter in my corner? Rhetorical question, as I know the answer.

Feel peace and know no more pain, Papa, know that we all will make sure Mom gets through this gently (as I know you were worried). I hope that you are watching us, feel how much we love you, are surrounded by loves ones. Until we meet again...

Katrina Hilpert - February 04, 2016 at 12:00 AM