



Harry L. Kettler

November 23, 1946 - April 19, 2026

LTC (Ret) Harry Louis Kettler was born on November 23rd, 1946, to Roy and Rosemary (Gerten) Kettler in Fulton, Illinois. There was an epidemic in the hospital where he was born and he was the only infant to survive. A blood transfusion from his father, sturdy genetics, and his higher birth weight contributed to his survival and he spent the rest of his life defying the odds.

He grew up adventuring on and near the Mississippi River and was a big brother to his younger sisters, Juliene and Colette. Later, his family moved to Cedar Falls, Iowa where he attended high school and then the University of Northern Iowa. While in college and because of his lifelong interest in the military, he enlisted in the Army National Guard.

In 1971, shortly after finishing college, Harry entered Officer Candidate School (OCS) and began his active duty Army career as an officer. Over the course of this career, he was stationed in many foreign and domestic locations including both a tour in Korea and serving in Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield. His friendship did not know boundaries of rank or position and he cultivated a great many relationships that came about because of his careers as both a soldier and later as a civilian contractor to the military.

Harry married Jacqueline Joyce in 1969 and had three children, Kari, Roy and Chris. Because of his military career, his family lived in many unique and

exciting places, including Hawaii, California, and Germany, moving every one to three years. His children were his greatest source of pride and he was never happier than being in their company. He made sure all of his children were instructed in many practical life skills and was always willing to help out with a project. There are so many memories of “doing things” with Dad that it is impossible to single out just a few. Whenever a task was complete, he would sit back to admire his handiwork and proclaim, “That’s a good job done.”

Harry’s last duty station was in Michigan, where he met his best friend, Barbara Barna, mid-life and gained two more children, Nicole (Barna) Royal and Natalie (Barna) Rhymer when they married in 1996. Harry and Barbara created a life on the water in Chesterfield and enjoyed spending time with their children and grandchildren, being out on the boat, renovating their home, and traveling, never failing to make the Sunday phone calls to loved ones.

In his later years, Harry dealt with a heart condition that would have sidelined many people years before it visibly affected him. He was determined to be present for his grandchildren: Styles Haley Kettler, Leni Haley Kettler, Ethan Kettler, Dillon Royal, and Jonas Rhymer. He loved them dearly.

Harry passed away quietly on April 19th after long-defying the odds associated with congestive heart failure and COPD. He was gentle and strong, tough and fragile, silly and serious, proud and humble. His taste in snack foods was terrible, but his taste in friends and loved ones was exceptional. He will be greatly missed by so very many.

Harry is survived by his wife, Barbara, his children Kari (Ari) Zieger, Roy (Liz Haley) Kettler, Chris (Niesa) Kettler, Nicole (Michael) Royal, and Natalie (Mat) Rhymer as well as his five grandchildren, his sister Colette (Mike) McMullen, and his nieces and their families.

A celebration of life will take place this summer at a date to be determined. In lieu of flowers or gifts, please support our friends and family living with Parkinson's Disease by considering a donation to the Michael J. Fox Foundation at <https://www.michaeljfox.org>. Because Harry's life touched so many people, his family would like to create a compilation of Memories of Harry to have at his celebration of life. If the spirit moves you, please email your fondest memories to kettlerblk@gmail.com