



Railsplitter Obituary



Jack Roy Ashenhurst

Jack Roy Ashenhurst, age 73, found peace January 18, 2018 merely weeks following an unexpected diagnosis of stage IV pancreatic cancer. An outwardly quiet man, Jack was inwardly fiercely passionate about all aspects of his life, particularly his family, friends, community and country. This passion fueled everything from his years as a husband, dad and grandpa, to his honorable career in public service.

Jack was born on May 21, 1944 to Howard and Fern Ashenhurst. He married his great love Virginia “Ginny” Lee (Aamodt), on the beautiful sunny day of October 21, 1967. This past fall, they had a small but glorious 50th wedding anniversary celebration with their closest family and friends, shortly before his diagnosis. That gathering, in hindsight, was a beautiful blessing to be with those you most love, just when you think life is about as sweet as it can get.

In their early years of marriage, Jack and Ginny were partner entrepreneurs, running an A&W during the all-American “root beer stand” concept of its time. As family priorities grew, both returned to school and Ginny became a nurse while Jack entered law enforcement and the US Army Reserve. Jack dedicated the remaining 32 years of his career to Milwaukee County as a Deputy Sheriff and Detective while he simultaneously rose to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 4 in the US Army Reserve, maintaining a high level of physical and mental agility, maintaining his personal commitment to best-serve his community and his country.

The great joy of Jack’s life was anything revolving around Ginny, their two sons and four grandchildren. As a dad, Jack coached Little League and taught his boys how to camp (although he might say perhaps that didn’t go so well, because nobody in the family camps anymore!). As a grandpa, he was a regular and weekly part of the lives of all four of his grandchildren, who will forever remember his Sunday morning “famous flapjacks”, Mario Kart tournaments and his attendance at their countless sporting events, dance recitals, concerts and theater productions, where his grandkids were always, “the best ones out there,” on the field, court and stage.



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Jack and Ginny also enjoyed a tightly knit extended family and circle of friends, with whom they shared everything from Godchildren to vacations to sports outings to golf rounds to coffee at the Gingerbread House. In recent years, Jack extended his circle of friends to central Florida, where he and Ginny enjoyed the winter months. A seemingly quiet intellectual, Jack was a voracious reader, breezing through more books in a month than many might in a lifetime, and taking time to dive into complex world news. His quiet nature was disarming, which meant if you were in Jack's presence, you were having fun, you were relaxed and you were having a nonjudgmental and intellectual conversation, which made him a very special friend to so many.

Jack faced his recent diagnosis and prognosis the same way he lived his healthy life: with continued care and love for his family. With a sharp mind until the end, Jack made sure every last detail and planning for his end of life was as organized as it could be, to minimize the stress on his heartbroken family and friends.

Jack was preceded in death by his parents, Howard and Fern Ashenhurst, his in-laws, Alfred and Marian Aamodt and a treasured nephew, Andrew Aamodt.

Jack is survived by his wife, Ginny, his pride-and-joy sons Mark and Dave, their wives Karla and Bridget, who loved Jack like another dad, and his treasured grandchildren, Sean, Erin, Logan and Colin, all of whom are grateful to be old enough to remember and carry his life-lessons and their shared memories for the rest of their lives. Jack is also survived by his sister Judy Harder (John), brother-in-law Dennis Aamodt (Beth), sister-in-law Debra Roberts (Rod), brother-in-law Richard Aamodt (Tracy), nephews Jack, Alan and Dave, and nieces Jill, Erika and Kristina. He is further survived by extended family members, as well as lifetime friends Jim and Lois Krenz, Marianne and Jim Valcq, and many others.

Interment at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery.