



Dennis Hilgenberg

July 29, 1942 - July 3, 2023

July 3, 2023, Mr. Dennis Paul Hilgenberg, 80, of Huntsville, Arkansas, passed away peacefully at home with his beloved wife, Dr. Marjorie Ellen Fitch-Hilgenberg and son, Steven Douglas Hilgenberg, at his side.

Dennis and Marjorie both lived in the Chicago area but met while attending the 1987 ILSI meeting in Naples, FL. They returned to Florida to be married on November 4, 1987, in the Jacksonville home of Sally Kay (Fitch) and Dr. K. Larry Jean. After the cake cutting and toast, they ordered pizza. Pizza and champagne have been an anniversary tradition for 35 years.

They resided in the Chicago area for 4 years before moving to Bridgetown, MS, just south of Memphis. For the past 23 years, Huntsville, AR has been home where they enjoyed the wildlife in their backyard, some more than others!

Dennis was born on July 29, 1942, to Joseph Christopher and Mary Francis (Graham) Hilgenberg in Indianapolis, Indiana. He attended Christ the King and St. Pious X schools. At 8 years, Dennis knew he wanted to be an engineer. After graduating from North Central High School in 1960, Dennis entered Purdue University earning a Bachelor's of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering in 1964.

Upon graduation from Purdue, Dennis worked for the McDonnell-Douglas Corporation in St. Louis, MO as a propulsion engineer. Dennis's first purchase was a 1964 GTO convertible which he loved. He worked closely with the original seven astronauts on the Gemini Space Program and on the original proposal for the F-15 aircraft. He obtained his Master's of Science degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Missouri, Rolla in 1967.

After McDonnell-Douglas, Dennis worked for the Falstaff Brewing Corporation, St Louis; Baxter International, Inc., Deerfield, IL; and G.D. Searle & Company, Skokie, IL. From 1979 - 1991, he served as Vice President of Engineering, later V.P. Technical, for Griffith Laboratories, Alsip, IL. He spent 4 years with Flavorite Laboratories, Horn Lake, MS as Director of Engineering, followed by Planning Director for the City of Horn Lake and V.P. of Operations for Baumer Foods, New Orleans. He worked as facilities manager for the Walton Art Center after moving to Northwest Arkansas when Marjorie joined the University of Arkansas faculty. Dennis operated his antique/collectible business for several years before retiring,

He loved music, Andy Williams being his favorite in college. Sinatra, Tony Bennett, the Rat Pack, Beach Boys, Elvis and Willie: he loved them all. He especially enjoyed going to the Little O' Oprey in West Fork for live music on Saturday nights.

Being a Purdue grad and an aerospace engineer were crowning achievements which Dennis remembered until his death. His Purdue cap and t-shirt featuring the F-15 jet were constants as was the photograph of his mom, dad and 2-year-old Denny. His feline companions were dear to him. Tigger II was the perfect support kitty bringing great comfort and joy during Dennis's illness. Over the years, many cats followed Dennis home to be loved and cared for. He is with them again, receiving and giving love and affection.

Dennis is predeceased by his parents. He is survived by wife, Marjorie Ellen; brother, Joseph (Jay) Christopher Hilgenberg II (Sharon); and children, Dennis Paul Hilgenberg Jr. (Miechelle), Steven Douglas Hilgenberg and Elizabeth Ann Hilgenberg. He leaves behind many in-laws, cousins, nieces and nephews.

Graveside services will be at the Vaughan Cemetery, Hindsville, on Friday, July 7, at 10:00 AM. He will be buried alongside his best friends, Earl Grigg, Clifton Wood and Howard Boudrey. He has missed them dearly. Services will be officiated by Father Keith Higginbotham, pastor, St. John the Evangelist Church, Huntsville.

Honorary pallbearers are Nancy Sue Wood, Sally Kay Jean, Irma Lee Boudrey, Virginia Ann Grigg, Steve Hilgenberg, Jay Hilgenberg, Larry Jean, and A.T. Smith. Burial is under the direction of Brashears Funeral Home and Crematorium, Huntsville. In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Paws and Claws Animal Shelter, Huntsville; the Vaughan Cemetery, P.O. Box 372, Huntsville, AR 72740; or Circle of Life Hospice, 901 Jones Rd, Springdale, AR 72762.

Cemetery Details

Vaughan-Whitener Cemetery

Madison County Road #7020
Hindsville, AR 72738

Previous Events

Graveside Service

JUL 7. 10:00 AM.

Vaughan Cemetery

Tribute Wall

BW

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Betty Welch - July 07, 2023 at 08:33 PM

BW

“ Denny was the oldest of the "cousins". He was the leader and the rest of us looked up to him. We spent some of the best holidays I can remember in those early years, especially Christmas and Easter. (Denny always found the most eggs.) He was a very special person, always kind and considerate. You could tell he and Marjorie were very happy. Denny will be missed. I have been picturing the welcoming party cheering for him just inside those "Pearly Gates"!

Betty Welch - July 07, 2023 at 08:25 PM



“ Cardinal Memorial Garden Stone was purchased for the family of Dennis Hilgenberg.



July 07, 2023 at 04:17 PM



“ Garden Accent - *"Perhaps the stars..."* was purchased for the family of Dennis Hilgenberg.



July 07, 2023 at 04:14 PM



“ My thoughts and prayers go out to all the Hilgenbergs today. I loved Denny. He was one of my favorite cousins. We had such wonderful times growing up in Indiana. There were picnics, parties, and celebrations with the whole family. There were always lots of cousins to play with. He had a very interesting life. He assured me he loved his life with Marjorie living in the South. I totally get the pizza and champagne. All these thoughts make me so grateful that Denny was in my life.

Sandy Brint - July 07, 2023 at 12:46 PM



“ Easter “peeps” close your eyes and open your mouth...I have to have a box of peeps every Easter now

Bernie Joe Hilgenberg - July 07, 2023 at 10:02 AM



“ Ellen, I am so sorry for your loss. You may not even remember me from our school bus ride. I was several grades behind you. May the Lord give you peace thru this difficult time.



Alvin L Herrington - July 06, 2023 at 05:42 PM

RS

“ Ellen,

I wish I had known Dennis better than I did. He had a very interesting and varied life with you according to the obituary that I know you wrote. Joan and I are so very sorry for you losing him. We will try the Pizza and champagne ritual in his memory.

Much love from Ron and Joan

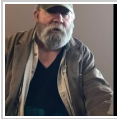
Ron and Joan Symes - July 05, 2023 at 06:44 PM

JH

From one brother to another I will miss you dearly. I love you.

*Your little brother,
Jay*

jay Hilgenberg - July 06, 2023 at 05:35 PM



You will be missed Denny , vaya con dios

Bernard Hilgenberg - July 07, 2023 at 05:52 PM