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John Charles Kunzman M.D.



May 1, 1938 - May 3, 2024

John was born in Denver, Colorado, on May 1, 1938, to John Arthur and Sylva Shaklee Kunzman. John grew up on the family farm near Fort Lupton, Colorado, with his two sisters Joycelaine Kunzman Muhs (Harvey), Joan Kunzman Brunelle (Robert), and his brother James Ross Kunzman.

His education began in a two-room schoolhouse in Ione, Colorado, with two teachers for eight grades. He went on to graduate from Fort Lupton High School at the age of 16 and attend the University of Colorado at Boulder where he began his undergraduate studies in Nuclear Engineering before transitioning to Pre -Medicine and the School of Medicine for his graduate degree.

His medical internship at the Santa ClaraCounty Hospital in San Jose, California, began on the same day in 1961 as his future wife, Rebecca Ruff, started her Medical Technology training. He was her first patient, and their journey began. They married in 1963 while Jack (as he is affectionately known to family and friends) was completing his surgery residency at Presbyterian Hospital (Stanford) in San Francisco.

Immediately after completing his surgical residency, Jack entered the US Air Force to serve in theVietnam War and spent two years treating wounded soldiers at Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines.

He returned to California after his tour of duty to become a surgeon at Kaiser Hospital in Walnut Creek, where he practiced for over 37 years, including multiple decades as the Chief of Surgery. He passed down his professional skills to young, aspiring, surgeons as a Professor of Surgery at UC Davis School of Medicine.

Jack had many passions in addition to surgery. He loved outdoor activities including sailing, skiing, and fishing.

As a Scout Leader for Boy Scout Troop 233 for many years, he took his sons on numerous outdoor adventures. They went camping, backpacking, canoeing, rock climbing, horseback riding, scuba diving, snorkeling, portaging, and much more. He also loved to play bridge, and attend theater and opera. Jack enjoyed traveling the world with family and friends, meeting new people and seeing new places.

Jack died on May 3, 2024. He is predeceased by his parents, his brother James, and his son Ted. He is survived by his loving family including his wife Beccie, his sons Daniel and Charles and his four beautiful grandchildren, Kennedy, Jonathan, Aidan and Charlotte.

He was a long-time member of the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church where his memorial celebration will be held on Saturday, July 20, 2024 at 11 a.m., 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette CA 94549.

Memorial gifts should be directed to the Parkinson Network of Mt. Diablo, PO Box 3127 Walnut Creek CA 94598 or the Michael J Fox Foundation.

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