



## Joseph Tillman

May 14, 1929 - October 7, 2022

It is with profound sadness that the family of Joseph Tillman announces his passing on October 7, 2022 at the age of 93. He passed away peacefully at his home surrounded by his family.

Joe was born in Minnesota to Frank and Jeanette Tillman. His parents chose his name in honor of the tradition of his father, Frank, and uncle, Edward, always inexplicably calling each other “Joe.” Perhaps this was the root of his lifelong sense of humor.

Raised in Minnesota, Joe played football and basketball, ran track, and played drums in the band. In 1945, Joe moved with his family to La Crosse, Wisconsin, where his father joined the family business, Tillman Brothers Furniture, which was founded in 1859 by Joe’s great grandfather, Friedrich, and Friedrich’s brother, Wilhelm, shortly after they immigrated from Germany. Joe graduated from Central High School in La Crosse in 1947.

After completing his first three years of college, Joe enlisted in the United States Navy during the Korean War. He served for four years as a radioman on the USS Los Angeles, a heavy cruiser. Having reached the rank of First Class Petty Officer as an enlisted man was a source of great pride for Joe. He could still state his service number and decipher Morse code right up until the end of his life. Once a radioman, always a radioman.

After the Navy, Joe returned to college at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He was a proud member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and loved to tell stories about their famous Fiji Island Parties. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a BS in Business in 1955.

Joe followed in the family furniture tradition, accepting a job as a manufacturer's sales representative for Kroehler Manufacturing Company in Naperville, Illinois. There he made lifelong friends among the other sales representatives.

At Kroehler, Joe met the irresistible Bonnie Bauder, an executive secretary who had grown up in Naperville. After a brief courtship, they married on June 30, 1956. Joe and Bonnie soon began a series of transfers with Kroehler, which took them to Los Angeles, California, where they enjoyed movie premiers and weekend trips to Las Vegas; Dayton, Ohio, where they adopted their two children and began their lifelong hobby of scuba diving; Madison, Connecticut, where Joe developed an interest in racing his beloved Sunfish sailboat; and Roswell, Georgia, where they both realized that they loved the warmer weather and wanted to stay put.

Joe focused on providing for his family and working hard, serving as a sales representative for multiple furniture companies until finally retiring in 2010. One of his proudest accomplishments was training for and completing the Peachtree Road Race for the first time at age 82. In addition, he faithfully did his own yard work until the age of 93. Joe enjoyed making friends in the neighborhood, bantering cleverly with Bonnie, and, surprisingly, watching Hallmark movies. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

Joe was preceded in death by his father, Frank Tillman; his mother, Jeanette Tillman; and his brother, William Tillman (Joan).

He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Bonita Tillman; his son, Peter Tillman; his daughter, Mary Garrison (Michael); his granddaughter, Leah Garrison; and two nephews.

The visitation for Joseph Tillman will take place on Sunday, October 16, 2022, from 2:00 PM until 4:00 PM at Northside Chapel, located at 12050 Crabapple Road in Roswell, Georgia. A funeral honoring Joe's life will follow at 4:00 PM. In recognition of Joe's straightforward, familiar approach to life, the dress code for these events will be casual.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you consider a donation to the Wounded Warrior Project to honor Joe's patriotism and military service.

# Cemetery Details

## Cremation - Northside Chapel Crematory

12050 Crabapple Road  
Roswell, GA

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT 16. 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM (ET)

Northside Chapel Funeral Directors & Crematory  
12050 Crabapple Road  
Roswell, GA

## Funeral Service

OCT 16. 4:00 PM (ET)

Northside Chapel Funeral Directors & Crematory  
12050 Crabapple Road  
Roswell, GA

# Tribute Wall



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Joseph Tillman.*



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October 14, 2022 at 08:31 AM



“ *Chris & Donna Villanueva lit a candle in memory of Joseph Tillman*



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**Chris & Donna Villanueva** - October 10, 2022 at 05:53 PM