

OBITUARY

Forest Wilburn Hildebrand

AUGUST 9, 1938 – JULY 19, 2025

Forest Wilburn Hildebrand, age 86, of Sarasota, FL passed away on Saturday, July 19, 2025. Wilbur was born on August 9, 1938, and is preceded in death by his parents, Forest and Helen Hildebrand.

Wilbur is survived by his devoted and beloved wife, Lucy Johnson Hildebrand, with whom he shared 62 wonderful years of marriage. He leaves behind his sisters Carolyn (Charlie) Davis, Janet Hildebrand, Donna (John) Leber, and Diane (Wayne) Blake, as well as his brother-in-law John Johnson. His daughters Laura Hildebrand, June (Todd) Boersma, and Donna (Rob) Kralowetz will cherish his memory, along with his grandchildren Lucy Hassell, Catie (John Michael) Hill, Ben Kralowetz, Will Kralowetz, Sean Boersma, and Olivia (Alfredo) Ellzey.

Born in Burke County, NC, Wilbur lived in North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania during his early years. After serving in the US Army from 1959 to 1961, he met his wife Lucy on a blind date set up by his sister

Carolyn while she was a student at UNC-Greensboro in 1961. They married in 1963 and started their family in Greensboro, NC. The family later moved to Winston-Salem, NC, and then to Bermuda Run, NC, where they raised their children.

Wilbur was a championship putter in the early days of Putt-Putt and the Professional Putter's Association, winning numerous tournaments and holding the global low score record at one point. As a franchise owner of Putt-Putt Golf and Games with locations in North Carolina, Virginia, and Texas for over 30 years, Wilbur was a valuable member of the community. He and his family were long-time members of Calvary Baptist Church before relocating to Sarasota, FL, where they split their time between Florida and Linville Ridge, NC, for over 25 years. In 2011, Wilbur and Lucy moved to Florida full-time, enjoying many years at the Oaks Country Club and Sarasota Baptist Church. Later, they moved to The Glenridge on Palmer Ranch, a retirement community where they had many friends and activities to keep them busy.

Wilbur loved playing golf and gin rummy, traveling the world with Lucy and close friends, entertaining his friends and family with good food and wine, and sharing stories about his life and business successes. He also had a passion for country and Southern gospel music, going on several cruises and trips featuring gospel singing.

Wilbur graduated from Glenn High School in 1955 at the age of 16. He was known for his family-first attitude, love for God, humility, generosity, sense of humor, work ethic, and intelligence. He never met a stranger and was always ready to lend a helping hand or share a story.

Wilbur employed hundreds of people and entertained many thousands of customers and families over his career. He was able to positively influence many young people's lives through running his family business, and it's hard to meet someone who grew up around one of his Putt-Putt locations that didn't spend weekends there playing miniature golf and video games.

Wilbur's legacy will live on through the many lives he touched and the memories he created with his loved ones. A special thank you to the Carroll Center nurses and caregivers who lovingly and expertly cared for Wilburn.

A private family service will be held at the Sarasota National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution to The Glenridge Foundation Compassion Fund. Contact: foundation@theglenridge.com or 941-552-5384.

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