

George P. Kalas Funeral Home, P.A.

John Matthew Slattery

(Died March 6, 2008)



John Matthew "Slats" Slattery, Lt. Col., USAF(Ret.) Age 80



On Thursday, March 6, 2008 of Ft. Washington, MD; the beloved husband of Jane Slattery; father of Michael R. and Matthew J. Slattery. He is also survived by six grandchildren, many other relatives and friends. Relatives and friends are invited to Mr. Slattery's Life Celebration at the GEORGE P. KALAS FUNERAL HOME, P.A., 6160 Oxon Hill Rd., Oxon Hill, MD on Sunday from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 pm. Mass of Christian Burial will be offered on Monday, March 10 at 10am at St. Ignatius Catholic Church, 2315 Brinkley Rd., Ft. Washington, MD. Interment private at Arlington National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in his memory to Capital Hospice, 9200 Basil Ct., #200, Largo, MD 20774.

John Matthew Slattery was born in Bay City Michigan on June 15, 1927 to Dr. Matthew Robert and Marion Tierney Slattery. He graduated from the Riverside Military Academy in 1945. He was called either Jack or "Slats" by his friends and family. Jack enlisted with the U.S. Marine Corp. after graduation. He served during the waning days of WWII, including duty in the Pacific Theater and in China. After the war Jack completed two years of college level courses in business administration. In 1951 Jack was called back to active duty and served in South Korea. During his tour he was med-evac'ed in a helicopter due to frostbite. It was this ride that sparked his lifelong love of helicopters. He decided while in the hospital that he wanted to be a helicopter pilot. Jack graduated from the U.S. Air Force Aviation Cadets Program in 1954. He was married shortly thereafter. Jack was stationed in Libya, Warner Robbins, Georgia, Bolling AFB and Andrews AFB. He served two tours of duty in Vietnam. Jack retired as a highly decorated Lieutenant Colonel in 1974. His medals and honors included Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Medal w/10, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal, Vietnamese Medal of Honor, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Air Gallantry Medal w/ Br Wings, Republic of Vietnam Fourragere Color of the Gallantry Cross, Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Superintendent Pilot Diploma of Honor, Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Medal and the Korean Service Medal. While he was in the Air Force, Jack began building and collecting helicopter models as well as documenting the history of helicopters, eventually building one of the world's largest helicopter model collections. After his retirement, Jack continued his passion of and dedication to helicopters and served the helicopter industry in his position as the archivist and curator of Helicopter Foundation International. There he continued to build and organize the documentation of the history of helicopters. It was estimated that the Foundation had over 25,000 articles, photographs, documents and other printed materials. Jack's helicopter model collection became the foundation of the collection at Helicopter Association

International. Jack was involved in many organizations. He was a member of the Royal Aeronautical Society, Great Britain, having been referred to the Society by Igor Sikorsky, the inventor of the modern helicopter. Jack served as the Secretary/Historian of the Twirly Birds for over 20 years. Jack also belonged to Helicopter Association International, the American Helicopter Association, the Air Force Association, the Army Aviation Association, the Marine Corp. Association, the Naval Helicopter Pilots Association, and the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. He was active in the Quiet Birdmen and the China Marines. Jack had a wisecrack for every occasion, and a nickname for everyone. His jokes, which always drew a chuckle from himself, brought a smile to everyone he met. He was a beloved "Silly Grandpa" to his grandchildren, who continue Jack's legacy of irreverent humor. Jack's kindness and sense of humor will be greatly missed.

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