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Family, friends, and all who loved him, thank you for being here to honor John Edward Miller—our Grandpa Jack.

He was born on May 3, 1939, and he left us at 85, with a life that felt full not because it was loud, but because it was steady. The way a good clock is steady—quiet, precise, dependable. He'd probably prefer that description to anything flowery.

Grandpa Jack grew up in Dayton, Ohio, where he learned early that you show up when you say you will, you finish what you start, and you don't make a fuss about either. Those lessons carried him through four years in the U.S. Navy, through forty years as a precision machinist, and through sixty-one years of marriage to his high school sweetheart, Linda.

His Navy stories never started with him as the hero. They often ended with a grin and something like, "And that's why you keep an extra line in your pocket." He liked the reliable fix more than the punchline. Though he had a dry one of those too.

He was a husband to Linda, a father to Michael, Karen, and Paul, a grandfather to six of us, and recently a great-grandfather. He gathered all those roles the same way he tied a proper knot—carefully, once, and so it held.

As his oldest grandson, I learned patience in the most practical ways. On early mornings at Lake Erie, while the sky was still an idea and not yet a color, he'd pour hot cocoa from an old thermos. He'd tell stories that unspooled at the same pace as the line slipping into the dark water. Not rushed. Not dramatic. Just true. He talked about Dayton, the Navy, the first time he met Grandma Linda after a football game, the best place to buy a decent screwdriver. By the time the sun showed itself, I'd learned more than how to cast. I'd learned how to

wait without wasting the waiting.

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He taught me how to tie a knot the right way, then made me tie it again, and again, until my fingers found the quiet confidence his had. He never said, “Be a man of your word.” He’d just take my hand in that firm handshake-hug of his and say, “You in?” If I said yes, that was the contract. If I said maybe, he’d smile and say, “Then it’s a no for now.” It was simple, and I try to honor that simplicity every day.

Grandpa’s skill as a machinist showed up in how he lived. His hands were steady, but not just at the lathe. He mentored apprentices who came in nervous and left with a trade and a little more of themselves. He volunteered at the VFW for decades, the kind of volunteer who showed up before the lights were on and locked the door after he’d swept the floor. If he ever told you what he did for someone, it was probably because you happened to be standing nearby when he needed an extra set of hands.

He found strength in faith the same way he found it at work benches and lakeshores—daily, quietly, consistently. Lifelong Catholic, daily prayer, no announcements. If you asked him what he was praying for, he’d say something like, “Ahead of schedule today. You good?” Then he’d listen, and you’d feel lighter by the end.

He had hobbies, sure—woodworking projects that smelled like cedar and patience, fixing old clocks that would argue with the hour until he persuaded them to behave, cheering for the Reds on a summer afternoon with the game humming on the radio. I always loved seeing his face when a balky clock finally ticked in rhythm again. He didn’t cheer. He just set it upright, listened a moment, and gave a small nod. That nod said he trusted time again.

People will miss his calm advice. Or maybe better said, his calm questions—“What changed?” “What did you promise?” “What can you do today?” He never pretended to have every answer. He knew where to apply a little pressure, the way you snug a knot before a hard pull. And those

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handshake-hugs—firm enough to steady you, warm enough to remind you that you belonged.

He was generous in the practical ways that count. If your porch step wobbled, he showed up with a tool bag. If your car coughed, he listened to it the way he listened to people—patiently, from the start, without interrupting. If you needed a ride, he was there early with the passenger seat cleared off and the radio low. He made rooms feel safe and kitchens feel welcoming. He made the ordinary feel well cared for.

He loved Grandma Linda without spectacle but with immense clarity. Sixty-one years together, and he still reached for her hand at church. They could communicate half a conversation with a look. When he teased her, it was always with a softness that let you know why their home felt like the center of gravity for all of us.

When I think of what he leaves us, I don’t think first of objects, though there are tables he built that will outlast us, and clocks that will tick long after today. I think of habits. The habit of keeping our word. The habit of showing up early. The habit of fixing what we can and leaving no mess. The habit of prayer at the start of a day that you hope will be ordinary and good.

If you want to honor him, take someone fishing at an unreasonable hour and pour them hot cocoa from an old thermos. Ask more questions than you give advice. Tell a story that lands not with a lesson, but with a smile and a nod. Cheer for the Reds even in a rebuilding year. And shake hands like you mean it, then pull the person in so they know it’s not just a handshake.

For those who are wondering what comes next, there will be a reception in the parish hall after the service. And in lieu of flowers, our family asks that donations be made to the local VFW post—one more way to carry forward the quiet service that shaped his life.

Grandpa Jack didn’t leave us with big speeches. He left us with a clear path.

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Love your people. Do your work well. Keep your promises. Pray without a sign on your back that says you’re doing it. And when the sun finally breaks over the water, take a moment to be glad you waited.

We love you, Grandpa. Thank you for the knots, the cocoa, the patience, and the way you made us feel safe and welcome.

We’ll keep your time. We’ll keep your word. And we’ll keep your stories moving forward, steady as a second hand.

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