



Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.

April 21, 1929 - October 3, 2021

Mr. Merrill “Mike” Eugene Butler, Jr., 92, died peacefully on Sunday, October 3, 2021, at the Harmony at Savannah Retirement Village with his loving wife of 64 years Marilyn by his side. The graveside service will be held at 11:00 AM on Friday, October 8, 2021, at the Hillcrest Cemetery. The Rev. Ben Palacz will officiate. He was a long-term resident of Sylvester and retired contractor for Hercules Inc. In addition to Marilyn, he is survived by his brother Kenneth Wayne Cook, children Michael Butler (Sheila), David Butler (Susan), Chris Butler (Karen), Kenneth Sweringen (Felicia) and Caroline DeMarco (Michael), grandchildren Meghan Butler, Michael Butler Jr., Jared Butler, Kristen Butler, Julia Butler, Jaden Hood, Brett Butler and great grandchildren Miranda Butler, Isaac Hood and Eli Hood.

Merrill went by Mike as many people in his early years would mispronounce Merrill. He was born in Columbia Mississippi to the late Peal Cook and Merrill Butler Sr. His father died when he was two, John Cook a fun-loving man would be his father figure and mentor. John and Peal would provide Merrill with two brothers the late John W. Cook and his kid brother Kenneth Wayne Cook. Merrill’s first love was nature. He would immerse himself in the sounds and nuances of the Mississippi woodlands near his home, honing skills as a hunter and explorer to the dismay of the forest dwelling inhabitants. His wanderlust would take a worldly track with the US Navy upon high school graduation with assignments in the Philippines, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and later the Mediterranean. He would transition from a boy to a man in the Navy,

hardened by the realities of war. Marines he befriended in the Philippines would be the first Americans to perish in the Korean conflict. He was a signalman and target spotter on the destroyer USS Wiltsie, providing close shore support roles during the war including MacArthur's campaign at Incheon Korea. Merrill was a prolific writer, entertaining family with stories and poetry of exotic encounters and destinations. He was also an accomplished dancer winning a contest in Hong Kong. He would later transition to Essex class carrier duty in the Mediterranean aboard the USS Bennington and USS Lake Champlain.

His family moved to Andalusia Alabama, while visiting he met the love of his life, a spirited Alabama girl Marilyn Wilson. They would begin a new life together in August 1957 that would last for sixty-four years and five children. Merrill started his own contracting business harvesting the remnants of long leaf pine stumps, used for resins in the chemical industry. Business would take them to Sylvester Georgia in 1959 and later West Palm beach Florida before returning to Sylvester. Marilyn was his anchor and passion throughout their marriage. Merrill worked hard for his family. He taught his children by example, hard work, optimism, and tenacity. His retirement years were spent mastering his love of the outdoors. He was an expert marksman, turkey, and deer hunter. He and Marilyn enjoyed their recreational campers and an occasional trip to the Biloxi casinos. Merrill was proud of his grandchildren and family; they are his legacy. At the age of 88 he published his memoirs, "Waypoints in My Life". He would say life is a series of sunrises and storms, but you must always look for the sunrise. Merrill always saw the sunrise; he was undefeatable in life. He will be missed by family and friends but will live on in their hearts. The family will receive friends on Thursday from 5:00 PM until 7:00 PM at Banks Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers please consider donating to Hospice of Savannah, www.hospicesavannah.org

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 7. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Banks Funeral Home
PO Box 550
210 N. Main Street
Sylvester, GA 31791
(229) 776-2055
banksfh@yahoo.com
<http://banks.funeralplan2.com/>

Funeral Service

OCT 8. 11:00 AM (ET)

Banks Funeral Home
PO Box 550
210 N. Main Street
Sylvester, GA 31791
(229) 776-2055
banksfh@yahoo.com
<http://banks.funeralplan2.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*

January 28, 2023 at 12:53 PM



“ *Deanna Merritt lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



Deanna Merritt - October 08, 2021 at 02:55 PM



“ *Elizabeth Cowles lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



Elizabeth Cowles - October 07, 2021 at 07:02 PM



“ *Tony Senkbeil lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



Tony Senkbeil - October 07, 2021 at 05:56 PM

CS

“ *Cindy Spence lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



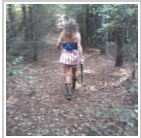
Cindy Spence - October 07, 2021 at 03:50 PM

JT

“ *Jimmie And Jan Taylor lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



Jimmie and Jan Taylor - October 07, 2021 at 02:36 PM



“ *Kristi Hartsfield - Whittington lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



Kristi Hartsfield - Whittington - October 07, 2021 at 08:27 AM

GS

“ *Gerry & John Sutton lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



Gerry & John Sutton - October 06, 2021 at 03:48 PM

AC

“ *Adriane Cross lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



Adriane Cross - October 06, 2021 at 10:19 AM

SR

“ *Sharon Rhoads lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



Sharon Rhoads - October 06, 2021 at 09:55 AM

CT

“ *Culmer Tanner lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



Culmer Tanner - October 05, 2021 at 08:27 PM

JC

“ *June Coker lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



June Coker - October 05, 2021 at 11:17 AM

CH

“ Fly high my friend Mike Butler! Give K-Boy a hug for me! You two try to behave!💙 Prayers for all.



Charlotte Souter Hall - October 04, 2021 at 10:39 PM

KC

“ Well, you have reached Waypoint #56 and in the words of J.R. Fender: "Lets roll 'em out boys, I need another load".

Rest well, my brother, you will never be forgotten!

Ken

Kenneth Cook - October 04, 2021 at 01:50 PM

MA

“ ME was a hoot! I am so thankful I had the pleasure of knowing. Prayers of peace for the entire family.

Mary Askew

Mary Askew - October 04, 2021 at 11:31 AM

RH

“ Lit a candle in memory of



rhonda - October 04, 2021 at 08:21 AM

CH

“ *Charlotte Souter Hall lit a candle in memory of Mr. Merrill Eugene Butler Jr.*



Charlotte Souter Hall - October 03, 2021 at 11:47 PM