

Hilbert V. Kiesel, 90, of Fort Myers, Fla., left to join Our Lord on Sunday, Oct. 21, 2007.

The son of Charles and Lillian Kiesel, he was born in New York and moved to Fort Myers in 1950. He, his brothers, and extended family members became pioneers in the fledgling shrimp business at Fort Myers Beach. By the end of his working career, he had shrimp boats and associated businesses at Fort Myers Beach, Biloxi, Miss., and Aransas Pass, Texas.

Hilbert retired and continued his love of the water, travel and helping others by joining the Royal Palm Yacht Club. During this time he was fleet captain for many years. He directed and led many cruises for the club. Each year, he and Dorothy would host the "Kiesel Shack Party." During his "watch," the "Atta Boy" award was established, and is his in perpetuity.

A founding member of Saint Cecilia's Catholic Church, Hilbert has passed the legacy of his faith to the fourth generation of his family. He now proudly watches his grandchildren and great-grandchildren attend Masses. Hilbert and his wife, Dorothy, received communion several times a week and prayed together daily. He and his brothers were Charter members and now lifetime honorary members of the 4th Degree Knights of Columbus. He has been a member of the Knights of Columbus for over 50 years. Hilbert felt privileged to attend his son, Hilbert D. Kiesel's initiation into the 4th Degree. A sportsman and hunter all his life, he is an honorary lifetime member of the South Shore Marlin and Tuna Club and the Babylon Tuna Club. Since age 60, he has enjoyed many trips as a certified PADI diver.

During WWII, Hilbert proudly served in the U.S. Navy. He was a member to the crew of the USS Benjamin Franklin "the ship that wouldn't die." While aboard, it was bombed by Japanese aircraft, split in half, and towed to shore in two pieces. Since that time, he has been a proud member of the "Survivors of the Franklin."

Following the "Big One," Dad became a member of the VFW and American Legion.

A familiar figure at many of the area sports fields, he proudly followed the progress of his seven grandchildren as they made their mark on many of the various teams at Bishop Verot and Fort Myers High Schools. During the last 10 years of his daughter Dorothy's teaching career, Hilbert was "Grandpa Kiesel" to her students.

Leaving behind to cherish his memory are his three children, Dorothy Lillian Kiesel Poll (George) of Fort Myers and Franklin, Hilbert D. Kiesel (Alene) of Franklin, and Thomas F. Kiesel (Ruth) of Fort Myers; his grandchildren, Kristen O'Halloran (Sean), Conrad F. Kiesel, Hillary Kiesel, Jarrett Kiesel (Kim) and Shannon Dorsey (David); six great-grandchildren whom have brought an inordinate amount of joy into his life; a brother, Charles "Scoop" Kiesel (Lenora); a sister, Lillian Wang; sisters-in-law, Joan Kiesel, Cecilia Kiesel, Linn Rohl and Ann Rohl; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Hilbert is now in the presence of his beloved wife of 68 years, Dorothy; brothers, Donald Kiesel and George Kiesel; brothers-in-law, Ted Wang, Henry Rohl and the Honorable Kenneth Rohl, all of whom preceded him into Heaven.

Services will be private.

Those who wish to honor Hilbert's memory may make donations to Hope Hospice, 9470 Healthpark Circle, Fort Myers, FL 33908.

Harvey-Engelhardt-Metz Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

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