

John Michael Willsey



John Michael Willsey (Mike), born June 16, 1938, in Annapolis, MD as a Navy Junior, passed away on April 28, 2024, in Rockville, MD. Mike graduated from Norfolk Catholic High School in 1956 and went on to attend the U.S. Naval Academy, where he earned a B.S. degree. While at the Naval Academy, he earned a Navy “N” playing varsity tennis and the VanDyke Award (for excellence in Government & History). He graduated with the Class of 1960.

His active Navy experience included: sea duty on a destroyer and subsequently on four submarines (serving as C.O. of sub 55567); six deployments to the Southeast Pacific and two deployments to the Mediterranean, all during the 1960s and 1970s. His later shore duty included attendance at the Navy Post-Graduate School in Monterey, CA (where he earned a

Master’s degree in Communications Management); teaching as an instructor at the U.S. Naval Academy; 3.5 years at the Pentagon (in Submarine Communications roles); and serving as Chief of Staff to NATO Mediterranean Submarine Command in Naples, Italy. Among the Service Medals he received were Defense Meritorious Services, Navy Commendation, Navy Expeditionary (with star), and Vietnam Defense (with six stars). He retired from active duty in August of 1984 and then served in various VP positions at Armed Forces Benefit Association for the next 23 years. For many years before and after retirement, he collected numerous tennis titles playing at his beloved Army Navy Country Club.

Mike married Shelby (nee Miller) of Orange, Virginia and a graduate of Mary Washington College in May of 1965. Mike and his loyal and talented wife of 59 years produced two sons, Peter (spouse Kristin) and David (spouse Kerri), and were blessed with five grandchildren (Alison, Kate, Liza, Jack and John). Mike’s wife, sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren loved him dearly and will greatly miss him, though they recognize that he had a long, successful and full life, filled with many laughs.

Demaine Funeral Home