

CDR John Hobart Rockwell III

April 8, 1944 – April 14, 2021



John Hobart Rockwell III, Commander, USN (Ret) passed away suddenly on April 14, 2021 from an apparent heart attack. He was 77 years old.

He was preceded in death by his brother Gregory Rockwell (Linda) and his parents, Phyllis and John Hobart Rockwell Jr. He is survived by his brothers Pete (Cynthia Hart), Steve, and Tim Rockwell (Loretta), his children Irene, Amy (Joe Prunka), Vincent (Lynne), and Natalie (Vincent Camiolo), his 8 grandchildren, 5 great grandchildren, and by Linda Garrett, his beautiful partner for over 25 years.

“Rocky” was a third generation US Naval Academy alumnus, graduating in 1966. Like his father, Rocky became a fighter pilot and served 20 years active duty. Some highlights include flying the F-8 Crusader on two USS Oriskany cruises, earning his Master’s degree at the University of Munich as an Olmsted Scholar, joining the Navy’s first F-14 squadron for service aboard the USS Enterprise, and serving as a Test Pilot Instructor for two years after graduating from the US Naval Test Pilot School in Patuxent River, MD.

Never one to keep his feet on the ground for long, he joined United Airlines in 1989 as a test pilot based in San Francisco, and he remained there until his retirement in 2018. He was an avid motorcyclist, snow skier, water skier, and hang-glider. He shared these hobbies with his children and anyone else, of any age, who was willing to learn and join him.

Rocky had numerous charities and volunteer organizations with which he worked, but he is probably best known as “The Cat Whisperer,” trapping feral cats throughout the San Francisco Bay area so they could be neutered and released, and working with Toni’s Kitty Rescue to nurse stray kittens back to health and socialize them for adoption. He basically turned his home into a four-star hotel for his feline friends where every cat and kitten he cared for got a name.

Rocky will be sorely missed by his family and friends. He was a great example of a kind, intelligent man with a beautiful, generous heart. We were all lucky to have had him in our lives.

Donations in his memory may be made to Toni’s Kitty Rescue, 415 Buena Vista Ave E, San Francisco, CA 94117 (toniskittyrescue.org), FINCA International (finca.org), or The Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito, CA (marinemammalcenter.org).

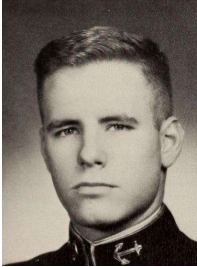
Services will be held at the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, and in San Francisco, California at a time to be announced later.

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Lucky Bag 1966

**JOHN HOBART ROCKWELL III San Rafael, CA
Fifth Battalion | 29nd Company**



It is said that a transplant frequently improves the product being moved, but in making the coast to coast trip from San Rafael, California, his home, to this Atlantic shore, John brings along so many fine qualities there's hardly room for improvement. Having been born into a Navy family on April 8, 1944, "Rocky" has charted a life full of genuine concern for his associates, a dedication to the vigorous, ordered life, and the awareness coupled with wry wit that make him both an example and a joy to those who know him best. A hard worker and fine athlete he demands of himself more than he can ask of others, and eyes critically his own life at every turn. He has a deep faith and a quiet strength, the bedrock of his personality, the prime implements of his interesting, and forceful mode of action. If to judge a person by his sincerity is an accurate measure of a man, then it would be easy to evaluate "Rocky", and to laud him, for he is a treasured acquaintance, a classmate admired, and an imperturbable friend.