

LEE M. KLINGENBERG



Lee M. Klingenberg, 86, of Mt. Lebanon, PA, died on February 23, 2025, at Asbury Place. Born in Philadelphia, on September 28, 1938, Lee was the only child of the late Louis G. and Mae N. (Meredith) Klingenberg. He is survived by his loving wife of almost 59 years, Jane; his daughter, Kristin and son-in-law, Thad Merriman; and his two grandsons, Charlie and Colin Merriman.

Lee always loved to draw, with some of his earliest recollections being at the kitchen table copying cartoon characters from comics books. Lee's parents spent most Saturday mornings during his youth driving him all over Pittsburgh to various art lessons. His artistic ability came from his paternal grandfather, who was an accomplished artist. The watercolors of the New Jersey coast painted by his godfather, Lee Thorne, fascinated him with their deft strokes and bold colors. His godfather's paintings had a lasting impact on Lee in later years when those old stirrings began to bubble up and flow out of his own brushes.

After graduating from Mt. Lebanon High School in 1956, Lee's sense of adventure led him to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps. Lee developed a love of the sea and all things nautical from his family's summer vacations in Ocean City, NJ, so he requested to be stationed aboard ship. He had the experience of a lifetime serving aboard the battleship USS Wisconsin BB-64, sailing to Europe, through the Arctic Circle, and to Latin America and Chile. Following his honorable discharge in 1958, he enrolled in the Art Institute of Pittsburgh to put some practical structure to his artistic yearnings and prepare himself for a career as a graphic designer. When his sense of adventure took him to California, he enrolled in advanced design classes at the ArtCenter College of Design in Pasadena and worked in the advertising industry in the Los Angeles area for several years.

While back East for Thanksgiving in 1963, he met the love of his life and soon returned to the Pittsburgh area for good. Lee and Jane settled in Mt. Lebanon for several years after their marriage, and then moved to Greensburg. They thoroughly enjoyed raising their daughter and three boxers, making wonderful friendships, and being involved in the Greensburg community for over 50 years. A long-time member of Christ Episcopal Church, Lee served on the Vestry and designed the church logo and the church newsletter for many years. He was a member of the Rotary Club of Greensburg and volunteered for the Salvation Army. He was a member of Greensburg Masonic Lodge No. 225, Coudersport Scottish Rite Consistory, and the Pittsburgh Syria Shrine. Lee and Jane loved to dance. They were active in the South Hills Cotillion Club and the Indiana Ballroom Dance Club, and took ballroom dance lessons well into their golden years. In 2020, they moved back to Mt. Lebanon to be closer to their family. Throughout the years, they delighted in spending time in Ocean City, NJ, and Stone Harbor, NJ, with Kristin, her friends, and eventually her husband and their sons. Being at the shore with his family combined the things that Lee loved most in life.

Lee blended his 45-year graphic design career with a parallel career painting watercolors, which won numerous regional awards, and also teaching watercolor painting. His commissions included animal and house portraits, landscapes, and seascapes. A treasured client aptly described Lee's gift as being able to capture the character of his subjects through watercolor. He was a member of the Greensburg Art Center and a past honorary member of the Pittsburgh Watercolor Society. On a personal level, he used his artistic abilities to help his wife with school bulletin boards, his daughter with Halloween costumes, and his grandsons with anything they asked their beloved "Papa" to create. He brought imagination to life with his talents and his playful willingness to go along with just about anything.

His quick and often silly sense of humor and easy-going friendliness will be forever remembered by those who knew him. Lee's laugh made everyone around him want to join in the fun, and he never laughed harder than during family game nights when being entertained by his grandsons' quips and antics. He was willing to approach anyone to share a story or provide a compliment; he even contacted then Prince Charles to express his genuine admiration for the future King of England's watercolor paintings. Lee had a unique knack for connecting with people. Lee's family frequently realized that they were known to other people simply because they were "Lee's family," and that fact will always provide a great sense of pride, joy, and comfort.

Lee's family wishes to thank the wonderful staff of Asbury Place and Commonwealth Hospice for taking excellent care of him. Family and friends will be received on Thursday, February 27, 2025, from 2 to 4 pm and 6 to 8 pm, at the **KEPPLE-GRAFT FUNERAL HOME**, 524 N. Main Street, Greensburg. Funeral services will be held on Friday, February 28, 2025, at 10:30 am, at Christ's Church, 145 N. Main Street, Greensburg, with Rev. Jeffrey Wiley officiating. Private interment will follow at St. Michael's Episcopal Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that those wishing to make contributions in honor of Lee make them to the Greensburg Art Center, 230 Todd School Road, Greensburg, PA 15601, or to the Pittsburgh Watercolor Society, 7604 Charleston Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15218.

For online condolences and information, please visit

www.kepplegraft.com

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