

IRA CHAUNCEY HOUCK JR.



Ira was the youngest of two children and the only son of Ira C. Houck, Sr. and Mary Elizabeth Swartz. He was predeceased by his sister, Maryann Brown. He was raised in Gibsonia, PA and graduated from Mars High School at age 16. Ira joined the United States Marine Corps Reserves, where he served honorably for more than 40 years, retiring as a full colonel. He obtained his undergraduate degree from

the University of Pittsburgh, where he met his bride of 53 years, Jeannine Marie Spatz, who predeceased him in August 2004. The couple married on September 15, 1950. Ira was accepted to the University of Pennsylvania School of Law, however, before he could attend his first semester, he was called to active duty to fight in the Korean War. Ira arrived in Korea in January 1951 and was attached to the 1st Marine Division, 1st Battalion, 1st Regiment. At just 22 years old, he was a Second Lieutenant and a graduate of the Marine Corps' first-ever Platoon Leader's Class. During his tour, he earned two Purple Hearts and was engaged in a fierce firefight known in Marine Corps history as "the Battle of Horseshoe Ridge." Upon returning home, Ira enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and reunited with Jeannine to begin their life together. Over the next 10 years, the couple had five children, Ira C. Houck, III ("Ike") (Margaret McKenna), Elizabeth Ann Houck ("Bitsy") (Tom Springston), Patricia Susan Yannie ("Trish") (Mark Yannie), Jon Maitland Houck ("Big Jon") and David Kennedy Houck (Loriann Kelly). As a practicing attorney, Ira co-owned and was a partner at his law firm, Breuck and Houck. In 1969, he played a key role in establishing the Allegheny County Public Defender's Office, where he later served as Chief Public Defender in 1996. Beyond his legal career, Ira also became an ordained Anglican priest and faithfully served as clergy at Grace Anglican Church on Mt. Washington for many years. Among his many adventures, he took up marathon running in his 40s, qualifying for and completing the Boston Marathon twice. At age 81, Ira rode the entire 184.5-mile Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Towpath (C&O Canal Towpath) from Cumberland, Maryland, to Washington, D.C. At age 83, he traveled to Hawaii to visit his eldest son, Ira, III, who was stationed there with the U.S. Army. During the visit, the two completed a 120-foot dive, earning their deep-diving certification together. Ira was the proud grandfather of Ira ("Cory") Houck, IV (Lauren), Elizabeth Kinchloe (Zachary), Mary Brazell (Andrew), Sean Houck (Amber), Chelsea Long (Nick), Colin Conley, Hannah Yannie, Joseph Yannie, Justin Houck and Kennedy Houck. He was also blessed with 17 great-grandchildren. Before dying, all five of his adult children and all ten of his adult grandchildren said their goodbyes directly to him. Ira is also survived by 17 great-grandchildren. A Funeral Service will be held on Friday, March 14, 2025, at 1 p.m., at Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church, 120 E. College Street, Canonsburg, PA 15317. A private Burial will follow on Saturday, March 15, wherein Ira is being buried with his beloved wife, Jeannine, of 53 years, who predeceased him in 2004.

If inclined, please send donations to Grace Anglican Church, Mount Washington.

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