



John Powell Sturm

June 28, 1938 - November 10, 2025

John Powell Sturm, 87, of St. James, Missouri, passed away peacefully at Phelps Health Hospital in Rolla, Missouri, on Monday, November 10, 2025. John was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on June 28, 1938, to the late John T. and Frances (Powell) Sturm. John transferred from public education after his sophomore year to Northwestern Military Academy, where he prepared for the military career he greatly looked forward to. A gifted athlete, John played basketball at both schools and was inducted into the Missouri S & T School Hall of Fame. He was also honored as “Player of the Century” at Northwestern Military Academy.

John was awarded a full scholarship to the University of Missouri and attended his freshman year there before transferring to the Missouri School of Mines (now Missouri S&T), earning a degree in aerospace engineering from what was then recognized as the top engineering school in the United States. He proudly served his country during the Berlin Crisis in the United States Army. Standing 6 feet 8 inches tall, John required special permission to enlist—he was initially told he was too tall and had flat feet. After receiving the necessary waivers, he went on to serve in the Army Corps of Engineers as a First Lieutenant. He was honorably discharged in 1969.

On September 28, 1974, John was united in marriage to Miss Betty Addison. John built a long and successful career with McDonnell Douglas, which later became Boeing. He retired at age 58, and he and Betty moved to St. James, where they designed and built a beautiful home and a cabin on the river. John

loved hunting, fishing, scuba diving, and spending time near the ocean. Sadly, Betty passed away in 2016.

Life grew quiet for John until 2017, when—armed with a computer and an open heart—he met his second great love, Ruth Helton, a widow from Ohio. After an online romance and many miles traveled, John convinced Ruth that St. James was exactly where she needed to be and for the last eight years, they shared life, laughter, and deep companionship. She took good care of him, and he took good care of her; together, they were the perfect team.

John Powell Sturm is survived by his partner in crime, Ruth Helton, of the home; children Stephen Sturm and wife Susan, of Wentzville, MO, Karen Spengel and husband Tony, of Panama City, FL, Scot Manley, of Panama City, FL, and Kimber Hildebrand, of O'Fallon, MO; former spouse and mother of his children, Donna Manley, of Panama City, FL; grandchildren, Ryan (Ashley) Sturm, Bailey Edgar, Brandon (Rachel) Spengel, Cody Spengel, Dustyn (Allyssa) Spengel, Jordan Hildebrand, Alyssa Hildebrand, and Cameron Manley; nine great-grandchildren, a host of extended family and many friends. In addition to his parents, John T. and Frances Sturm, he was preceded in death by his son David John Sturm, and sister, Jane Laycock.

Private family service will be held at a later date. For online condolences please visit www.jamesgahrmortuary.com