

Russell Ben Hilton

Funeral Service

Friday, April 15, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Chapel
Sturgis, South Dakota

Officiant

Pastor Bruce White

Musicians

Helen VanDam Allyson Daane

Musical Selections

“Be Still My Soul” “How Great Thou Art”
“I Stand All Amazed”

Pallbearers

Douglas Daane Tammy Ceretto James Hilton Ryan Coacher
Robyn Kotter Jason Daane Aaron Sanders Erin Sanders

Honorary Pallbearers

Russell's Great-Grandchildren

Final Resting Place

Private family burial
Black Hills National Cemetery
Sturgis, South Dakota





Russell Ben Hilton, 86, passed away April 11, 2022, at his home in Rapid City, SD. Russ is survived by his wife of 65 years, Audrey Chappell Hilton. Together they had 4 children: daughters, LeEllen (Rick) McCartney, Belle Fourche, SD, Allyson (Doug) Daane, Rapid City, SD, Sharon (Tammy) Kienzle, Moab, UT; and one son, Ronald (Mari) Hilton, Summerset, SD. Russ is also survived by brothers, Billy (Deanna) Hilton, and Peter Dunker; and his sisters, Marilyn (Ron) Gartner, and Lessie (Chuck) Schoenfelder; fourteen grandchildren, eighteen great-grandchildren, numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by an infant daughter; his father, Clifford Hilton; his mother and step-father, Helen and James B. Dunker; two brothers, Jerry, and Roger Hilton; and a sister, JoAnn Sell.

Russ, or “Benny” as he was called as a child, was born June 24, 1935, in Mt. Vernon, SD. The family moved around following work on various farms throughout SD, and ND. His father secured a position working for a grain elevator and the family settled in Belvidere, SD. Russ was an avid baseball player and also played basketball on his school team, as well as playing the trumpet in the grade school band.

In 1946, his father passed away, and his mother remarried James B. “Bruce” Dunker, and moved to Interior, SD. When school burned down in Interior, he moved to Wagner, SD, to live with his grandparents, Anna and John Mach, to attend to high school. During high school in Wagner, Russ was on the debate team and played Legion baseball. After his high school graduation, Russ attended SD School of Mines, in Rapid City, SD, where he played drums with the college band. Russ decided to enlist in the United States Air Force in 1954.

In 1955, Russell arrived at his first duty assignment in Salt Lake City, Utah, where he met Audrey Chappell on a blind date. After a time, Russ proposed to Audrey and they were married in her family’s yard in Lyman, Utah.

Russ and Audrey made the Air Force a career and enjoyed living all over the United States with a foreign posting to Montreal, Quebec, Canada. After 2 years in Canada, Russ applied for and was accepted to Officer Candidate School. In his words, “Suddenly, by an act of Congress, I was considered a gentleman!” Russ served three tours in Vietnam and was awarded the Bronze Star. Russ retired in 1974, after twenty years of service with the rank of Major.

Upon his retirement from the Air Force, Russ accepted a position as the Chief of Police in Sturgis, SD. He served the City of Sturgis for four years. After leaving the police force, Russ and his brother, Roger, bought the Sturgis Theater. They sold the theater about a year later and Russell sold cars for the local Chevrolet dealership for two years. In 1981, Russ was offered a job in Hawthorne, NV, as the Chief of Security for a private company at the same base where he was stationed in the late 1960s. After a visit to Audrey’s sister in Arizona, he purchased Arrow Auto Parts in Fredonia, AZ. Russ owned the parts store until 1988, when he and Audrey decided to move back to South Dakota to be closer to their children and grandchildren.

After moving back to Sturgis, Russ, worked part time as a tourist agent at the rest stop outside of Tilford, SD, and helped Audrey with her rally venture-Grandma’s Indian Tacos, serving in his words as the “Official host, BS manager, repair man, and garbage collector”. He and Audrey enjoyed travelling, taking trips to family and OCS reunions, yearly trips to Las Vegas, an Alaskan cruise, and visiting family and friends across the country. Russ and his brother, Roger made wooden toys and items and loved going to craft fairs in the area selling their wares as “Two Grumpy Guys Woodworking”.

Throughout his life, Russ loved baseball and as an adult played on several softball teams. He was a pitcher in a fast-pitch league with a pitch that was clocked at almost 100 miles an hour. He enjoyed camping with family and trips to Las Vegas, and Wendover, NV. Russ loved living close to Deadwood where he and Audrey could go for lunch and a few rounds of video poker, where he usually won.

Russ and Audrey moved from Sturgis to Spearfish, SD, with a final move to Rapid City, SD in late 2021. Russ will be fondly remembered by his family and friends.

Donations to Alzheimer's Association in lieu of flowers would be appreciated. Condolences may be sent to the family at www.kinkadefunerals.com.

We thank you for your presence and condolences

Day is Done (Taps)

<i>Day is done, gone the sun</i>	<i>Then goodnight, peaceful night;</i>
<i>From the hills, from the lake, from the sky</i>	<i>Till the light of the dawn shineth bright.</i>
<i>All is well, safely rest;</i>	<i>God is near, do not fear,</i>
<i>God is nigh.</i>	<i>Friend, goodnight.</i>