



Robert W. Herring Jr.

April 1, 1929 - August 3, 2024

Robert was born in Nashville, Tennessee and grew up all over the South as his father moved from job to job during the Great Depression, living in places like North Augusta in South Carolina and Evergreen, Alabama. Eventually the family settled in Birmingham where his father was an insurance agent. Robert went to high school in Birmingham, graduating from Phillips High School in 1947. After graduation, he matriculated at Howard College (now Samford University) just south of Birmingham where he took a degree in Chemistry.

With the coming of the Korean War, he joined the US Navy and went off to boot camp at the Great Lakes Naval Station north of Chicago. After completing his basic naval training, he returned home to marry his high school sweetheart Patricia Hurlbert and installed her with his parents at their house in Birmingham while he returned to Illinois to take advanced training in electronics repair. When he finished this school, he was assigned to the USS Krishna (ARL-38), an LST left over from World War 2 that had been converted to a repair vessel, based at the Little Creek Amphibious Base near Norfolk, Virginia. He and Pat moved to Virginia and lived on base while the ship was attached to the Atlantic Fleet. After his four-year enlistment was up, he and Pat and one-year-old Robert III moved back to Alabama.

While Pat and Robert stayed with his parents in Birmingham, he enrolled at Auburn University and completed a degree in Electronics Engineering. After

graduation, he got a job in Florida working for Radiation, Inc. supporting the nascent space program. He eventually went to work for NASA and helped design medical telemetry for the Gemini program. During this period of life in Florida Robert and Pat welcomed Stuart, John and Rachel to the growing family. After NASA moved him to Houston, he sought to move back to Florida and so took a job with IBM back at Cape Canaveral supporting the Apollo program. After the earliest phase of the Moon landings, in 1969, IBM moved him to Huntsville, Alabama where he worked at the Marshall Space Flight Center.

From there he sought new opportunities in New Orleans where he worked first for an oil company and then became the chief engineer for a radio station. In Demopolis, Alabama he worked for the Citadel Cement Corporation (now CEMEX). He always wanted to move back to Florida, and when the opportunity arose, he signed on with Grumman to support the Space Shuttle program.

He was a musician: first, as an instrumentalist playing the clarinet and bassoon; later, he devoted himself to directing choir, chorus, and opera singing. He had a lifelong interest in education and literature, and strongly encouraged the pursuit of these by his children as well.

He was active in politics and became a precinct captain for the Republican party while living in Altamonte Springs. He was predeceased by his wife Marion Patricia Hurlbert, his wife of 67 years, and is survived by his children Robert III, Stuart, John, and Rachel, six grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

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