



Harry R. Lee
October 12, 1943 – November 24, 2021

VISITATION: Friday, December 3rd from 11 am to 12:00 noon at the West Center Chapel, followed by FUNERAL SERVICE at noon. Interment, Westlawn-Hillcrest.

Harry R. Lee was born on October 12, 1943, the third of four children born to Leroy W. Lee (formerly Latowsky), M.D., and Dorothy P. Lee in Philadelphia, PA while his father completed his urology residency at Philadelphia General Hospital before returning to Omaha.

Harry was born deaf due to rubella. Harry graduated from Nebraska School for the Deaf in 1962 as salutatorian of his class before attending Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C. from which he graduated with a degree in mathematics. While in high school he played football and basketball and was named the school's "outstanding trackman" by the Omaha Kiwanis Club. Harry set swimming records while attending Gallaudet College in the 100 and 200-yard backstroke and the backstroke in the medley relay and was a member of the Gallaudet College varsity swimming team when it won a bronze medal for the United States during the Tenth Annual World Games for the Deaf in 1965.

After college graduation, Harry returned to Omaha and worked as a computer programmer for United of Omaha, an affiliate of Mutual of Omaha, for two years before returning to Washington, D.C., where he worked at the Pentagon in intelligence for about nine years. While on a trip overseas with other members of the deaf community, Harry met his wife to be who provided her address to Harry which began a letter-writing romance leading to marriage. Harry proposed to Cheryl in a restaurant overlooking the Potomac River but had trouble getting Cheryl, who is also hearing impaired, to see the jewelry box which contained the engagement ring. As the proposal unfolded, a bottle of champagne arrived at the table from another patron in the restaurant who witnessed the proposal unfolding, Donald H. Rumsfeld, then secretary of defense under president Gerald Ford.

Harry R. Lee and Cheryl S. (Sindlinger) Lee were married on June 4, 1977, at Conneaut Lake, Pennsylvania. Harry and Cheryl returned to Nebraska where Harry worked at Offutt Air Force Base for the Department of Defense as a computer specialist for 40 years until retirement.

Two children (both hearing) were born to Harry and Cheryl, Jeffrey T. Latowsky (formerly Lee) and Joni B. Lee.

Harry was preceded in death by his parents; his brother Roger Lee; his wife's parents, Clyde Sindlinger and Helen "Joan" (Shaffer) Sindlinger Scully; and his wife's half-brother, Tom Scully. Harry is survived by his wife, Cheryl S. (Sindlinger) Lee; his son, Jeffrey T. Latowsky, and wife, Jennifer, and their daughter, Violet; his daughter, Joni B. Lee, and her life partner, Dan Rotter, and their daughter, Adira; his sisters, Marcia (Cliff) Hollestelle and Marie (Bill) Johnson; and his sister-in-law, Joann Lee. Harry is also survived by his brother-in-law, Michael Scully; numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family members; and many friends which include members of the Omaha deaf community and those who also attended Westside Baptist Church.

Harry lived life fully and loved to travel, particularly to attend conventions involving the deaf community or special events. Harry enjoyed playing cards (particularly poker), watching game shows, and watching football. Harry supported deaf missions.

An article written about Harry after he participated in the Tenth Annual World Games for the Deaf in 1965, entitled *Champion Athlete Finds Deafness No Hurdle* noted Harry's deafness had not interfered with his athletic or scholastic achievements and quoted Harry as saying: "The thing that has always bothered me the most about my deafness is music – I can feel the vibrations, but I've never heard the music." While Harry may not have heard the music, the song of Harry's life resonates loudly for those who knew and I.