

John Lance Swanson



The world was blessed with John Lance Swanson on April 16, 1939. He passed away peacefully on April 1, 2026, surrounded by family. In his nearly 87 years, he excelled in the Navy, traveled the world, racked up accolades, and found the love of his life to start—and continue—a family legacy.

On a blind date on D-Day, June 6, 1958, John met Mary Selena Dovel. She asked him, “Can you play bridge?” He said no. But before their second date, John had learned, and they became bridge partners for over 68 years, achieving the rank of Platinum Life Master in the American Contract Bridge League, which is only accomplished by 0.2% of members.

That devotion transcended in other ways, including the Navy, where John graduated from the United States Naval Academy, class of 1960, and Harvard Business School in 1972 with a degree of Master in Business Administration. On June 11, 1960, a mere three days after graduating from the US Naval Academy, John married Selena, his one and only, and they celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary in 2025.

During his 23-year career as a supply corps officer, CAPT Swanson served on or was stationed at the USS Suffolk County; US Naval Station Newport, RI; Military Equipment Delivery Team, Rangoon, Burma; Defense Fuel Supply Center, Alexandria, VA; Staff Commander Service Group Three, Sasebo, Japan; USS Columbus; Navy Ships Parts Control Center, Mechanicsburg, PA; Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Shipbuilding and Logistics; and ended his career by standing up the Navy Resale and Services Support Office, Field Support Office, Mechanicsburg, PA. His military decorations include the Legion of Merit Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with one star, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal Cuba, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device, among many others. CAPT Swanson retired in 1983 after 23 years of service.

He is survived by his wife Selena, children Mary Dillon (Bill) and John L. Swanson Jr. (Deborah), grandchildren Sydney Dillon Bochicchio (Jack), Lexi Dillon, and Miranda Dillon, and great-grandchildren Luke Dillon Bochicchio and Peter Samuel Bochicchio, as well as half-brothers Chris (Sue) Swanson and Kent (Pam) Swanson.

He is predeceased by his parents, Paul Francis and Marie (Schneider) Swanson, stepmother Olga (Fedden) Swanson, and sister Paula Swanson Haney.

John will be missed by his family, the bridge community, both locally and in Williamsburg, VA, many friends, former colleagues, and neighbors.

To his grandchildren, he is most remembered as the man who would always bring them Cracker Jacks and \$2 bills, who would jump off the couch at exactly 5 p.m. to pour two large glasses of rosé for himself and Selena, and who had a knack for storytelling, his mind forever sharp. They’d hear their Mommom and Granddaddy’s different takes on bridge strategy and their travels around the world on ocean cruises and riverboats, playing bridge with Russians,

Australians, New Zealanders, South Americans, and more. His generosity and positivity will live on in each of them. His kids remember his many hours out in the yard teaching them to throw the baseball or playing touch football, ping-pong and pool matches in the basement, his always joyful take on life, and his sense of adventure, trying new things from skiing to skating to exotic food. His wife remembers the quiet moments with her best friend, their adventures, and the sparkle of the most handsome blue eyes she's ever seen. His legacy transcends death, and he'll visit us as cardinals up in treetops or with whispers of the wind.

Neill Funeral Home