

George Russell Jenkins

George Russell Jenkins, born November 17, 1946, passed away on February 24, 2022. He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Susan Jenkins, and children: Hope Jenkins, Russ Jenkins, Denise (Thomas) Ulbråten, Shawn (Joshua) Peterson, and Jason (Amy) Jenkins. A family that started with 5 Jenkins children multiplied over the years and has now grown roots spreading to a total of 11 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, George R Jenkins and Mary Jane Verna, his sister Mary Jane Shields and daughter-in-law Meredith Jenkins.

George was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2012.

Although there is no cure, he and Susan never let it define him and definitely did not stop them from meeting with family and friends. These ten years were spent building many precious new memories with all their children, grandchildren, and other family and friends.



George will always be known as a loving and generous husband and proud of the life he built together with Susan. His thoughtfulness was evident in many gestures from lavishing her with flowers to ensuring each post they moved to was an easy transition by personally packing/unpacking every item and creating a loving home environment for them and their family.

As a father he is remembered as loving, patient, having a calmness that allowed you to believe in yourself, and being a provider of wisdom, rational thinking, and mutual respect. He encouraged his kids to be independent, not afraid of change, and even though all left home early for boarding schools while overseas – he provided security with his pride and faith in each of them. His joy and love for his grandchildren is immeasurable as their pictures cover the walls in each room of their home. Nothing made him happier than to watch them all grow. Whether it was winning a stuffed animal for them at the amusement park, betting on a football game, working in the garden with him or just knowing granddaddy was taking them out somewhere fun; time with granddaddy was always enjoyed.

George worked for USAID for 29 years as a Controller (14 more years as a contractor) and placed as much pride into his work and colleagues as he did his family. Hard work and dedication were always his motto to his co-workers and to his kids. He knew from the start he wanted a life that would expose himself and his family to a world of cultures. From stations in Yemen, Mali, Bangladesh, and Mozambique to contracts in Russia, Peru, Nicaragua, and Democratic Republic of Congo his career led to living and traveling to over 50 countries. George didn't choose the exotic overseas posts, but instead ones he knew he could build on within the local community, make a difference in the work post, and build a network of friends that he would continue to carry with him on his different travels. He

was known in the work place for his compassion for colleagues and being one of the best mentors they had. He was humble, laid back and preferred a baseball hat and a good conversation over a cold beer to a suit and tie affair of prestige.

His love and respect for family and friends was passed down to him from his mother Mary Jane Verna. Although he preferred smaller crowds than she did, all had a special place in his heart. His favorite part of her family gatherings was to hang out in a quiet area and have a good conversation with an aunt, uncle, cousin, niece or nephew – and he cherished all these moments.

His generosity was unlimited and especially when in terms of his time or doing favors for others. He went the extra mile to make sure you were celebrated and center of attention even though he never wanted attention himself. While he chose a career that kept him working abroad, he valued the connection with family across the USA and invested years of summer vacations to ensure his kids had a balance of worldwide culture and connections with their family in the USA. Even after the kids were grown, he was known for taking care of others and driving across country (no distance was too far) to catch up with family and friends even if it was just for a lunch visit. He knew the value of connection and never let physical distance be a barrier.

His athletic pursuits included playing on the Bamako, Mali softball team that travelled throughout West Africa. Everyone was happy when “Big George” stepped to the plate as they knew a homerun was not out of the question. Later his interest focused more to tennis while in Bangladesh and he was known for his killer serve and speed on the court (opponents quickly learned not to let size fool them!) No one was more surprised than he was when he found his next athletic challenge in the dojo of Black Belt Academy. Here he developed not only a killer roundhouse, but a lifelong friendship with Kazi and Ruhi Qais. His retirement years led to a new competitive drive on the golf course with Susan.

As a result of their extensive travel, George’s kids have all planted roots in different states and countries, but the Jenkins’ bond is always strong and supportive. As most people know – there is never a quiet moment when the Jenkins’ gang gathers – as there are many, all very different personalities, but what brings them together is common respect for the man behind their story. Rest in peace with your family in heaven and we will continue to nurture the roots you planted.

We are incredibly grateful for all the support from friends and family over the years. In lieu of flowers, contributions to The Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation, <https://themmrf.org> are appreciated. In respect for his wishes, and far reaching network of family and friends.