



## John Gill Guntharp

April 9, 1938 - December 24, 2025

In Loving Memory of John Gill Guntharp

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John Gill Guntharp was a great many things, brilliant, witty and charming to name a few, but it was his devotion to his wife, his family and to his country that truly defined him. He spent years in the high-pressure world of Cold War intelligence, but never lost his kind nature, his sense of humor or his love for his family.

Born in Stamford, Texas, on April 9, 1938, John's early years were a whirlwind of geography. As the son of a geologist, he lived a life on the move, famously attending 22 different schools before graduating from high school in Wichita Falls, Texas. His academic journey then let him to Texas Tech University, where he studied engineering, joined the Air Force ROTC and was in the ROTC marching band. Upon earning his BS in Electrical Engineering in 1961, John was inducted into the Air Force as a second lieutenant. His service took him from Turkey back to Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio, where he completed his military tenure in 1964 and immediately transitioned into a distinguished 35-year civilian career.

In the intelligence community John served as Technical Advisor at Security

Hill, the nerve center for Air Force intelligence. He navigated the complex world of Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) and Radio Technology and visited the world's most sensitive collection sites during the height of the Cold War.

In 2001, John received the highest professional accolade possible: induction into the Freedom Through Vigilance Association (FTVA) Hall of Honor. Recognized for "immeasurable contributions," and as "a guardian of national security". Beyond his operational work, John authored, "Topics in Radio Technology, Applications, Techniques and Countermeasures in WWII and Early Cold War," a text that remains a vital historical and technical guide for the next generation of electronic warfare professionals.

In 1966, John married the love of his life, Elizabeth (Betty) Guntharp. The two were perfectly suited, sharing a deep bond built on common interests. They were active members of Covenant Presbyterian Church and shared a love for the San Antonio Symphony, the theater, travel, and all things British. They were avid readers and lifelong learners, taking classes in art, pottery, and archaeology and even participating in active archaeological digs together. John and Betty were also devoted animal lovers, ensuring their home was always a haven for their many cherished cats and dogs.

While John, an only child, initially felt timid around his in-laws, he grew to love the weeks long visits from his nieces and nephew, family holidays, vacations with his parents-in-law to the Cayman's and to Great Britain. He was especially close to Stephen, his brother-in-law, and the two of them went to annual astronomy conferences together, fueled by John's love for the stars. The duo built (and famously crashed) model airplanes, and with their spouses bought a boat and lake house together and enjoyed numerous trips to the

Cayman Islands. John found his truest sense of belonging within the Austin clan.

John is survived by his brother-in-law and close friend, Stephen Austin and his wife, Marlene; his sisters-in-law, Margaret (Bandy) Haggstrom and Cynthia Wilson and her husband Scott; and a host of nieces and nephews—Myai, Courtney, Heather, Amy, and Justin—and great nephews and nieces who will remember him with love.

While John's professional career was defined by the high-stakes, technical world of Cold War intelligence, his personal life was clearly anchored by a deep love for family, a curiosity for the natural world, and a deep, unwavering love for his wife Betty.

A graveside service with military honors will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 10, at Mission Park at the Dominion with Pastor Dan Milford officiating.

In honor of John's passions, the family suggests memorial donations to the San Antonio Symphony, the Humane Society, or Covenant Presbyterian Church.

# Cemetery Details

## Mission Burial Park North

20900 I.H. 10  
West San Antonio, TX 78230

# Previous Events

## Graveside Service with Military Honors

JAN 10. 10:00 AM (CT)

Chambers Chapel at Mission Burial Park North  
20900 IH 10 West  
San Antonio, TX 78257