



Alcuin Francis Kilian

January 14, 1930 - May 3, 2025

Kilian, Alcuin F., Age 95, of Hopkins, formerly of Edina, was welcomed to eternal life on May 3, 2025. Al proudly served his country in the U.S. Air Force from 1947 to 1951. While in the service he met his beloved wife of 71 years, Mary Ann. Al spent his entire career working with airplanes. He started with Capital Airlines which merged into United Airlines; he retired in 1991. Al was a dedicated caregiver for 38 years to Mary Ann after her stroke; he did so with love, patience and strength.

Al is preceded in death by his parents, his beloved wife, Mary Ann, and son, Dan. He is survived by his children Jim, John (Lynda), Janet (Brad) Ost and daughter-in-law Michelle; grandchildren Heidi (James) Brown, Heather (Michael) Lambert, Cody (John) Chadbourn, Taylor (CJ) Smith, Kelsey (Chris) Randall, Andrew Ost, Austin Ost, Elizabeth Kilian and Haley Kilian; great-grandchildren Presley Brown, Cayden Lambert, Lucas Lambert, Noah Lambert, Grayson Smith and Isaac Randall; and many relatives and friends. In lieu of flowers, memorials preferred to Sharing and Caring Hands or American Heart Association.

My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

-John 14:2-3

Al Kilian's Life Story

Al was born in Melrose, Minnesota to John and Ida (Thielen) Kilian. He was the third child of a farming family of four boys and four girls. Upon graduating from Melrose High School in 1947 and realizing that he did not want to farm (specifically, he did not like milking cows!), Al joined the Air Force on October 3, 1947, at the age of 17.

Al served for four years during the Korean War. He was stationed at Walker Airforce Base in Roswell, New Mexico, and was assigned to the 509th Bombardment Wing which was part of the Strategic Air Command. During this time, he also had a three-month and a four-month temporary duty assignment in England. While in the Air Force, he obtained airplane mechanic training on B-29s which was the start of his life-long love for airplanes and travel.

Al's other life-long love was discovered in the service as well. While living in the same barracks as Mary's brother Jack, Al saw a picture of Mary in Jack's wallet which inspired him to start writing letters to her on February 22, 1950. They dated largely via mail for two years while Mary worked at a bank in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. After being honorably discharged as a Staff Sergeant in October 1951, Al took a job as an airplane mechanic in Chicago with Capital Airlines (which later merged with United Airlines). On most of Al's days off, he would drive four hours to see Mary. After just one winter of driving back and forth, Al had decided that was enough! He proposed to Mary on February 10, 1952, and they were married at St. Patrick's Church in Fond du Lac on September 6, 1952.

After living a short time in Chicago and Detroit, Al and Mary moved to Minnesota in 1956. In 1957, they settled in Edina and became members of Our Lady of Grace Church. Mary was a full-time homemaker raising Jim, John, Janet and Dan while Al worked various shifts during his 40 year airline career. Al spent his first 20 years in maintenance and his last 20 years

supervising ground operations in Minneapolis. Al retired in 1991 from United Airlines.

Al and Mary took advantage of Al's work benefits by traveling all over the United States and to many countries in Europe; they visited Tokyo and Hong Kong as well. Al also toured New Zealand and Australia. In retirement, they wintered in the Sun City, Arizona area for 25 years where Al took up golfing. He even golfed several rounds last summer!

For 38 years of Al and Mary's 71 year marriage, Al was Mary's primary caregiver after her paralyzing stroke in 1985. He did so with love, patience and grace. He also volunteered 22 years for Store-to-Door, a grocery shopping service for shut-ins. Al was a dedicated walker, a sports enthusiast, a polka fan and enjoyed a competitive game of cards, no matter the game. In March 2018, Al and Mary moved to The Glenn - Hopkins where they were able to attend daily mass. Son Dan passed away from a heart attack on May 22, 2019, and Mary took her last breath on September 26, 2023, while Al held the hand of his beloved.

Blessed be his memory!

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Cemetery Details

Fort Snelling National Cemetery

7601 34th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55450

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 21. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church
5071 Eden Avenue
Edina, MN 55436

Funeral Service

MAY 21. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church
5071 Eden Avenue
Edina, MN 55436

Tribute Wall

CF

“ Al and Mary were good friends with my mom and dad, Chuck and Rose Marie Nichols. I have fond memories of them at my parents house over the years. What I especially love about your dad was him picking up my dad for golf, when my father had the beginnings of Alzheimers. What a great friend. I also recall him driving his moped to Our Lady of Grace for daily Mass. What a sweet man. I am glad I knew him and appreciate his great friendship with my parents, who have both passed away as well. Many blessings to all of you, and prayers for your father. God bless, Cherie Nichols Fesenmaier

Cherie Nichols Fesenmaier - May 26, 2025 at 08:10 PM

RC

“ "Uncle Al" was one of the most amazing men We've had the privilege to make and share memories with. He and Aunt Mary were the epitome of faith, hope, and love. They were both amazing role models for us and led by their example. Uncle Al began a Christmas tradition of calling all of his nieces and nephews to wish us a Merry Christmas and let us know he loved us and thought of us all. As my brother Joe simply said, "Christmas will never be the same." You gave us the greatest gift of all... your unconditional love. I'll never forget when you explained to me how you and your generation were "the buffer", which meant you're all "next to go to Heaven." Now that you're gone, we're the buffer. We look forward to joining you down the road... Please save us a seat. ;) Thank you and God bless you, Aunt Mary, and Dan, who we know you're now reunited with. We love you and miss you and will forever hold your beautiful memory in our hearts. Rick & Teri Cherne

Rick Cherne - May 20, 2025 at 08:59 PM

JK

“ Well Al you set the bar, at 95 plus, rather high for our family. As I think back, albeit I am seven years younger, you had a lot of influence on my life. One of my first memories is when I moved from the baby bed to be Gerry's bed partner in the boys bedroom that included you and Bob in the other bed. The temperature would often drop below freezing at night but the flannel pjs and sheets kept us warm. I can still remember my first days in the barn while you were enjoying milking the cows. I also remember you getting a break when you stayed and worked at Kriips cafe which enabled you to join the band and play the French horn. I also remember the unfinished car you made in shop class that became a welcomed toy for us once we got it going. I also remember getting up at three in the morning to do the chores before leaving for your wedding in Wisconsin. I was only 15 but dad let me do almost all the driving which I think attributed to my fainting as I kneeled next to Ed and witnessed you exchange vows with Mary. One of the best things I did was follow your foot steps and enlisted in the USAF at age 17. I did not get to be a mechanic like you but I enjoyed my eight year obligation and the GI bill that was part of the package. We did our own thing for the most part while raising our kids but hooked up again for many winters in Sun City, AZ. I never embraced the game of golf like you did but we sure played lots of cards with the two of you and Mel and Bernice. I hope you are enjoying your eternal reward with, among others, Mom and Dad. Love, John (and Diane).

John Kilian - May 18, 2025 at 02:48 PM

J1

“ While I won't be able to attend the funeral, I will be thinking of Al, a special person. While I knew Al from work prior to this, I really got to know him when working with him during the strike of 1978. That six weeks or so, working in a relatively small group, provided lots of fun experiences. We worked together again when I had a temporary assignment at MSP in the early 80's. I was fortunate to become better acquainted with Mary at the monthly retiree luncheons; after that, it was a much-appreciated telephone relationship. They were both wonderful and very positive human beings. I feel very fortunate to have known them both.

Jan Meyer

Jan Meyer (UAL from 1965-1987 - May 14, 2025 at 11:40 AM

TS

“ *The Behnen Cousins and Their Spouses purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Alcuin Francis Kilian.*



The Behnen Cousins and Their Spouses - May 12, 2025 at 10:30 PM