



Nathaniel Robbins, Sr

March 10, 1924 - May 26, 2025

Nathaniel Robbins Sr. passed away peacefully on May 26 at the age of 101. He will join his beloved wife Twink who died on May 7, 2021. Born on March 10, 1924, in Grand Haven, Michigan, Nat was the son of Nathaniel and Helene Robbins and younger brother to Joan Robbins. He graduated from Stanford in 1946 with a B.A. In Engineering. When Nat was 7, his family moved from Grand Haven to Spring Lake, and that summer his father pushed him out in a sailboat for the first time by himself. He ended up down shore by several miles but managed to find his way back home using the local railroad tracks as a guide. He sailed on Spring Lake every summer from 1931 to 1941 and won the Spring Lake Championship in the Crescent class when he was 13. When he was 17, he won the Western Michigan E Scow Championship.. Sailing became a lifelong passion: Nat won the Minnetonka Yacht Club Class E Championship 11 times from 1957 to 1973; he won the ILYA (Inland Lakes Yachting Association) Championship 3 times and the NCESA (National Class E Scow Association) Championship once in 1961. He was Commodore of the Minnetonka Yacht Club, the Inland Lakes Yachting Association and the NCESA.

Nat demonstrated early engineering skills by becoming an Eagle Scout at the age of 15. He would later use these skills in his famous basement workroom where he built model boats, Heathkit radios and walkie talkies for his son and fixed nearly everything in the house. He joined the Navy in 1944 and learned

to fly an F6F by studying the operating manual that he borrowed from the chief of maintenance. He also flew a Corsair where he got in trouble for dogfighting which was prohibited. After winning the last dogfight one day, he proudly landed and was told the skipper wanted to see him. When Nat got to his office the skipper said, "Was that you dogfighting up there, Robbins?" Nat responded, "Yes, sir." The skipper continued, "Well, that was me that you beat in that last dogfight." And with a smile: "Don't ever do it again!"

After graduating from Stanford in 1946, Nat married Twink and moved to Minnesota. After short stints at Peavey and Minneapolis Moline, he joined Honeywell where he worked for 25 years. During that time, he obtained a U.S. patent for a safety device which prevented heat from being transmitted to thermostats. He left Honeywell as Director of Engineering, Residential Division in 1973 and started Robbins Towing Company in 1975.

Nat was a natural leader and was very involved in his community wherever he lived. He was part of the church vestry at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Edina, a member of the Sister Kenny Board, president of the Edina Hockey Association, president of Boca Grande Isles Association and Commodore of Boca Grande Pass Yacht Club. Nat could be a tough disciplinarian. When asked why he didn't spoil his grandchildren, he said "If we don't say no, who will?" Nat passed on his love of sports, reading, current events and family. His multi-skill level Easter Day jelly bean hunts were legendary. One of his best April Fool's Day pranks was putting shaving cream instead of whipping cream in a favorite chocolate cookie dessert. He and Twink raised 3 children to tell the truth, stand up straight and never be late. We will miss him very much.

Nat is survived by three children: Denise Lassey, Nat Jr. (Linda), and Andrea Collins; 6 grandchildren: Mary Looney (Jim), Jennie Iverson (Ross), Amy Collins, Emily Howell (David), Sydney Baker (Mike) Alex Robbins (Kaileigh); and 11 great grandchildren.

A private memorial service will be held at Lakewood Cemetery on July 16.
Memorials are preferred to the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute and the
Friendship Village Team Member Appreciation Fund.