



Victor John Van Winkle

March 21, 2023

Victor John Van Winkle, 79, of Lake Ridge, Virginia, passed away on March 21, 2023. He was born on June 3, 1943 in Chicago, Illinois, to Sylvia and Russell Van Winkle.

Victor was a tiny preemie when he was born at a time when few babies that small survived. When he was born, his father was away in Hawaii contributing to the war effort by working in the shipyards, but his mother visited him in the hospital every day until she could bring him home. When the war was over, they joined his father in Long Beach where his parents bought the house that remained the family home until both parents died. The family grew with the births of younger brothers Richard, Michael, and Thomas. The boys grew up in a close-knit neighborhood where neighbors watched out for them and there was plenty of room to play. Russell set up a basketball hoop that was frequently in use, and Victor and his brothers rode their bicycles all over Long Beach. Playing golf and watching sporting events on TV were Victor's favorite adult hobbies, as well as playing bridge and board games with family and friends.

A small group of close friends that Victor made at Hughes Junior High School remained lifelong friends. After graduating from Long Beach Poly High School in 1961, Victor attended Long Beach City College, eventually earning a bachelor's degree in English at Long Beach State College in 1970. He met

Rheta at a party that summer and his love for all games was reflected in their first date to a hockey game. They began playing competitive Scrabble games early on that they continued to play until a few years before Victor's death. They were married on April 3, 1971, in Christ Church, Sausalito where a close friend was the Episcopal priest. Victor studied education at the University of Southern California and did his student teaching in Watts in the spring of 1972.

Their son Aaron was born May 20, 1972 in Harbor City, California. Soon after, Victor fell in love with Colorado during a visit to Rheta's parents in Denver with the new baby. During that visit, Victor secured a job teaching special education in Boulder, Colorado which resulted in a whirlwind move to Colorado where they lived for the next two years until Victor realized that teaching was not for him.

Still uncertain as to a profession, in 1974 Victor began a managerial job at White Wing Services, a company that provided cleaning services to colleges in Springfield, Massachusetts. The job was challenging, but the family enjoyed their time in New England and visited many historic sites. By this time computers were becoming hugely interesting to Victor, so in the fall of 1975 they loaded their belongings into a large U-Haul Truck and drove back to Colorado, where Victor began taking computer classes while teaching part-time at Metropolitan State College in Denver.

Their daughter Sarah was born on December 19, 1978 in Denver. In hopes of finding more job security, Victor took the Federal Civil Service Entrance exam, and in 1981 he began his career with the Department of Defense at the Finance Center on Lowry Air Force Base, specializing in small computer technology. In 1989 he travelled to bases in Germany, England, and Guam to oversee the installation of computer systems. During his work trip to Germany, Rheta joined him for a few memorable weeks where they squeezed in

sightseeing after work and on weekends. In 1990 he was transferred to the Pentagon, where he worked until retiring from the civil service in December, 2007.

During retirement Rheta and Victor took several enjoyable cruises to Norway, Alaska, the Hawaiian Islands, and the West Indies. He was also an active member of Lifelong Learning Institute of Manassas, taking classes and helping with computer issues. He continued to read voraciously until his memory began to fail him but his love for games continued until shortly before he died. His love for Rheta, his children, grandchildren, and brothers sustained him in his last days.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, please consider donating to the Arthritis or Alzheimer's Foundations.