



*Gene Cummins, aged 71, of Gaithersburg, Maryland died on October 24, 2016. He is survived by his wife Kay, his children, Tom, Tink, and Kathy, their spouses, Whitney, Joe, and Tom, his seven adoring grandchildren, Eamonn, Riley, Aoife, Oisin, Declan, Clodagh, and Clare, and his beloved cockapoo, Saoirse.*

*Gene was born Eugene Joseph Cummins Jr. on February 3, 1945 in Jefferson City, Missouri, the oldest of eight children. A devout Catholic, Gene entered the Vincentian seminary at age fourteen to study for the priesthood, but his vocation took him in another direction and, in 1969, he married Kay. After two tours of duty in Viet Nam as both a United States Navy Swift Boat Captain and a Communications Officer on the USS Hanson, Gene attended a total immersion program at the Defense Language Institute in California, where he became fluent in Russian. He began work in the Naval Security Group as a both a Russian and Spanish linguist, and together, he and Kay traveled the world with their growing family.*

*In the late 1970s, when Gene was stationed in the DC area, he and Kay settled in Gaithersburg. In 1985, he followed his lifelong religious calling, and was ordained as a Permanent Deacon for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington. In that capacity, Gene soon discovered a love for firefighting which prompted him to serve more than two decades as the Montgomery County Fire Department Chaplain. He was also a volunteer firefighter and EMT. In 1987, Gene retired from the Navy as a Lieutenant Commander, having been honored with a Bronze Star for Valor. After his face was grazed by a bullet in Viet Nam, he earned the exasperation of his superiors by turning down a Purple Heart which, he maintained, was an honor to be reserved for people who sustained "real injuries." He enjoyed a subsequent career in radio engineering that included a stint as the Chief Radio Engineer for Montgomery County, and director of the radio shop which serves local firefighters and law enforcement. He was passionate about that role, as he understood that the radios under his charge functioned as a lifeline to the police and firefighters who depended on them.*

*Gene was a selfless man who lived in the service of others. He loved Ireland, music, reading, animals, and good food. He made a tremendous impact on the lives of countless young people over the years, as a friend, mentor, and adopted father. His death is a tremendous loss for the community.*