



## Karen Kilhefner Martindale

July 27, 1959 - May 5, 2026

Karen Martindale, nee Kilhefner, passed away with her children and a sister at her side on May 5, 2026, at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital at the age of 66. She was born in Philadelphia, PA on July 27, 1959, to Joyce (nee Gougeon) and the late John Kilhefner.

Karen was a proud veteran of the United States Navy, serving from 1977 to 1981 as a jet engine mechanic and A-7 plane captain, having served at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, California.

Karen is survived by her son Robert (Karin) Martindale of Tallahassee, FL, daughter Robin (Andrew) Stavely of Lakeland, FL, grandchildren Sean of Lakeland, FL, Bradley, Connor, and Logan of Tallahassee, FL, mother Joyce Kilhefner of Sebastian, FL, and siblings Cheryl (Steve) Schmidt of Necedah, WI, Angela (David) Ledford of Vero Beach FL, Dawn (Dan) Moore of West Dundee, IL, Michael (Kimmari) Kilhefner of Algonquin, IL, and Michelle (Kent) Holdren of Bristol, IN. She was preceded in death by her father John Kilhefner.

Karen lived with a rare kind of honesty - unfiltered, fearless, and unmistakably her own. She said what she meant and meant what she said, a trait that made her both formidable and deeply trusted by those who knew her best. Beneath that strong exterior was a generous and devoted heart, one that showed up

quietly and consistently for the people she loved.

As a daughter, she carried deep loyalty to her family. As a sister, she was a guide, a protector, and at times a co-conspirator - teaching life's lessons not from a distance, but side by side, often with a bit of boldness and humor. As a mother and aunt, she gave her love fully: steady, protective, and unwavering, creating a sense of safety and belonging that will endure.

She embraced life on her own terms, with a spirited independence that left a lasting impression on everyone she met. Karen was both strong and soft, direct, and compassionate - a rare balance that defined her relationships and her legacy. Her presence was unforgettable, her love undeniable, and her impact permanent. She will be missed deeply and remembered always.

In lieu of flowers or donations, Karen asks that everyone take advantage of adventures that come your way and enjoy each day of life you are given.

Dayne Parker of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or [www.bevisfh.com](http://www.bevisfh.com)) is assisting the family with their arrangements.