**Horst H. Hetzler**

**October 7, 1931 – August 7, 2025**



IN THE CARE OF

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It is with profound sadness that the Hetzler Family shares the news that they have lost their beloved patriarch. Horst Heinrich Hetzler – affectionately known as Hank, Dad, and Opa – passed away peacefully at home on Thursday, August 7th, 2025, at the age of 93, surrounded by his family. He will be welcomed with warm and loving arms in heaven by his sweetheart and wife of 66 years, Salwa (Sally) Hetzler (Faris), mother and father, Betty (Muhs) and Johann Andreas Hetzler, brother Manfred Hetzler, and the many friends and family who went before him.

Born in Nuremberg, Germany, Horst was only a child when the Second World War began in 1939, and much of his life was shaped by his experiences growing up against the backdrop of the war. During the Allied bombings, Nuremberg was destroyed – mostly by air and mostly at night, forcing the family to sleep in their clothing to save time in making an escape. Horst and his family would use the basement of their apartment block for shelter during air raids; one bomb landed at the entrance of the shelter and – miraculously cushioned by dirt – did not explode. Horst’s story was far from over, and his family relocated to the countryside temporarily. During these years, he and his brother worked with farmers to provide food to German citizens and also took part in woodworking to make toys for the children of poor families. This ignited Horst’s love of both gardening and woodcraft – two hobbies that he kept up for most of his life.

Horst came to America via New York, NY on the SS Nieuw Amsterdam at the age of 19 and, barely able to speak English, he joined the U.S. Air Force. It was there that he forged a close friendship with Thomas Faris of Fall River, MA, who would later become his brother-in-law. He served during the Korean War Conflict and was stationed at Sampson Air Force Base (New York), Goose Bay (Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada), and later at Shaw Field (South Carolina). He and his wife Sally eventually settled down and built a beautiful life in Fall River, where she was born and raised. Two decades would pass before he ever returned to visit Germany, accompanied by his wife and four children.

After his time in service, Horst worked for Sarama Lighting for 32 years – 18 of which were spent as Tool Room Foreman. From 1989 until his retirement, he worked with his son Karl at H&S Tool helping to grow the business into what it is today.

To know Horst was to know that he was proudly German. He was a long-standing member of the German Club of Bristol County and loved to celebrate and share his culture and traditions. Horst was also Lebanese by marriage and was a dedicated parishioner of Saint Anthony of the Desert Church. He enjoyed the simple pleasures of life. He would bike around town, and to and from work. His vegetable and herb garden was a source of great pride and the harvest was regularly incorporated into the meals made by his wife and extended family. He was an early audio-visual enthusiast, having acquired both a camera and a video camera in the 1950s, and he loved to document his family life. These preserved memories – both the mundane and the extraordinary – are cherished by the entire family. He was a talented craftsman and passed not only the skills but also the enthusiasm down to his children and many of his grandchildren who put various trades into practice both personally and professionally. He loved music – in particular, German folk music – and was a self-taught musician known to play both the organ and harmonica. He loved to travel and took many exciting trips with his wife until dementia started to slow her down in the early 2000s. From then until her passing in 2019, Hank was her full-time caregiver – a role he took on with immense love and dedication.

Horst is survived by three sons and a daughter: John Hetzler and his wife Colleen of Swansea, Erich Hetzler and his wife JoAnn of Fall River, Karl Hetzler and his wife Susan of Fall River, and Heidi Squadrito and her husband Stephen of Milford. He leaves behind twelve grandchildren and thirty great-grandchildren, as well as several nieces and nephews both here and in Germany. Sharp of mind and wit until the end, Hank was a friend to all and was never without a story or joke (sometimes off-color). His legacy will live on through his family and their deep connections to the community; through his son, a grandson, and a great-granddaughter who all followed him into military service; and in the traditions he started that will be carried forward for generations to come.

His funeral will be held on Tuesday, August 12th at 9:00 AM from Waring-Sullivan Funeral Home at Cherry Place, 178 Winter Street, Fall River, followed by a funeral mass at Saint Anthony of the Desert Church, 300 N Eastern Ave, Fall River at 10:00 AM. Relatives and friends are welcome. Visiting hours will be held at Waring-Sullivan Funeral Home at Cherry Place on Monday, August 11th from 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM. Entombment will follow at Notre Dame Cemetery Mausoleum, Fall River. The family would like to thank the caregivers who so tirelessly provided both compassionate care and companionship to Hank in the last years of his life. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Saint Anthony of the Desert Church.