



## Hilary F. Schmittzehe

May 5, 2014

Hilary F. Schmittzehe, 84, of Cape Girardeau, chief executive officer of VIP Industries in Cape Girardeau, died Monday, May 5, 2014, at Saint Francis Medical Center, surrounded by family and friends. He was born and raised in Cape Girardeau. He graduated from Notre Dame Regional High School before enrolling in the Montgomery and Taylor School of Horology, from which he earned a degree in watchmaking. Hilary operated a jewelry business 25 years before committing himself entirely to his lifelong passion of serving persons with mental and developmental disabilities. Hilary, who had two daughters, Cynthia and Barbara, both with disabilities, helped craft legislation to transform the Missouri state mental health system for persons with mental and developmental disabilities. Along with legislation, Schmittzehe founded the Cape Girardeau Community Sheltered Workshop, which has provided employment for more than 3,000 individuals since 1967. "Our son Matthew has worked at VIP more than 20 years. Had it not have been for Mr. Schmittzehe and the others establishing the VIP workshops, Matt would not have the quality of life that he now has. Mr. Schmittzehe's love, care and concern for the handicapped was outstanding." -- Richard Aufdenberg, chairman of VIP Industries board. "Mr. Schmittzehe was a dedicated servant to persons with developmental disabilities. His leadership, vision, and friendship will be greatly missed." -- Susan Wallis, senior vice president of VIP Industries. Many people have asked Mr. Schmittzehe how he judged the success and impact of the programs he organized, and what kept him

motivated toward his lifetime support of persons with developmental disabilities. His answer to all was, "I see the smiles on the faces of all the individuals we serve each day, and that is what keeps me motivated." In addition to championing legislation and employment for persons with disabilities, Hilary was a member of St. Vincent's Knights of Columbus Council 1111 of Cape Girardeau. He joined in 1948 and held various offices within the council, including grand knight for two years, district deputy, state deputy, state director, supreme director and supreme master of the Fourth Degree from 1987 to 1991. Largely through his efforts, the Knights of Columbus adopted the Tootsie Roll Program for persons with developmental disabilities as their major charity throughout the state of Missouri, which has provided millions of dollars of funding for programs for persons with mental and developmental disabilities. During his life, he served his country in the Navy Reserve, and on many public and private boards, including the Cape Girardeau School Board, Cape Girardeau board of directors for United Way, Missouri Governor's Advisory Council on Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Region 9 Developmental Disability Council, the Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, Saint Francis Medical Center advisory board and the advisory board for Notre Dame High School. Hilary also founded and served as the president of Marian Charities, a not-for-profit corporation formed in 1990 to provide aid to the poor and disadvantaged. "Hilary Schmittzehe was a kindhearted person and friend to so many. He was always willing to go the extra mile to help his employees." Barbara Osborne, friend and co-board member. He was preceded in death by his parents, Hilary A. and Philomena B. Jarosik Schmittzehe; his first wife, Marge Martin Schmittzehe; and two daughters, Cynthia and Barbara Schmittzehe. Hilary, one of six children, joins his deceased brother Donald Schmittzehe (wife Wanda), and precedes sister Anna Marie (Marlin) Buelow, sister Mary C. Orf (deceased husband Norbert), sister Dorothy J. (Alvin) Low and brother Jerome A. (Barbara) Schmittzehe. He was remarried, and preceded in death by his second wife, Mary George Zeller Schmittzehe, with

whom he has three stepchildren, Katie Graham (husband Tom), Steve Zeller (wife Kathy) and Kelly Freed (husband Larry). He has many cherished grandchildren, Erin Willhite (Tobin), Meghan Lenington (Chris), Lisa Cobb, Shannon Malady (Rodney), Stephen Zeller, Jenna Koeller (Duke), Sam Zeller, Jake Zeller, Collin Freed and Justin Freed. Hilary also has many great-grandchildren, Tyler O'Brien, Nick Delashmit, Tia Laramie, Lucas Lenington, Tessa Willhite, Blake Willhite, Grace Lenington, Kinley Lenington, Colton Lenington, Olivia Borman, Nico Keller, Gus Keller and Louie Keller. Visitation will be from 4 to 8 p.m. Thursday at Ford and Sons Mount Auburn Funeral Home, with parish prayers at 7 p.m., followed by the Knights of Columbus rosary. Funeral Mass will be at 10 a.m. Friday at St. Mary's Cathedral, with the Rev. Tom Kiefer officiating. Burial will be in St. Mary's Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Marian Charities, P.O. Box 831, Cape Girardeau, MO 63702-0831. Online condolences can be made at [fordandsonsfuneralhome.com](http://fordandsonsfuneralhome.com)

# Tribute Wall

BR

“ My daughter, Rebecca, worked at the WorkShop for 26 year. Hilary was a champion for the handicapped. He di more for the handicapped in Southeast missouri than anyone else I know. He was surrounded by good people on his boards. My husband, Milton and i both had the priviledge of serving on the boards. There is no way I can say enough about Hilary and what my family thought of him. Rest in peace Smitty. Billie Roth

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**Billie Roth** - September 05, 2014 at 12:00 AM

SA

“ I am so sorry to hear about this. He was an amazing man and was more like a father to me most of the time instead of a boss. He taught me so many things that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. His life was dedicated to improving the lives of mentally and physically handicapped people. He will always be special to me as I am sure he is to many people and will not be forgotten. I know he is as happy to see Cindy and Bobbie again as they are to see him. R.I.P. my dear friend.

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**Sharon Adney** - August 05, 2014 at 12:00 AM

RE

“ Hilary was very dedicated to Knights of Columbus and to persons with developmental disabilities. He will be missed by many. Bob Erb

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**Robert Erb** - July 05, 2014 at 12:00 AM

MK

“ Hilary was such a great friend to my husband and I. He had a great love for the Knights of Columbus the world over. He did so much for the mentally and physically handicapped. He will be missed by many. Marcella Kempker

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**Marcella Kempker** - July 05, 2014 at 12:00 AM

ES

“ Hilary was a true friend to me. When I took over the Roses for Life he was always there to help me. I have visited Hilary at V.I.P. a few times. If I had problems with the Roses he always had the help. He will be truly be missed. I will make my last visit tomorrow. ED

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**Ed Spence** - July 05, 2014 at 12:00 AM