



# Francis Leroy Roach

DEC 9, 1928 - DEC 1, 2014



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## **Francis Leroy Roach**

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**F**rancis L. “Frank” Roach, a retired U.S. Naval officer known for his life of service, his deep faith, his generosity and his gingerbread houses, was called home to God on Dec. 1, 2014. A resident of DuPont, Wash., he passed at Orchard Park Health and Rehabilitation Center in Tacoma just eight days shy of his 86th birthday.

Mr. Roach was born Dec. 9, 1928 to Francis Edward and Mary Ann Spetz Roach, in Erie, Pa., the fourth of eight children. Mr. Roach attended Cathedral Preparatory School for Boys in Erie, graduating in 1946, hoping to continue studies in a seminary and become a Roman Catholic priest. But after passing admission tests for the U.S. Navy to win a bet with the payoff of a lemon meringue pie, Mr. Roach enlisted in the Navy in hopes that after two years, he would be able to attend college. Instead, Mr. Roach was encouraged to seek admission to the U.S. Naval Academy while he was an electronics instructor there, and received a U.S. Secretary of the Navy appointment. He graduated in 1953, the first in his family to earn a college degree, and served in the Navy until his retirement as a Captain in 1983, with a career that spanned 37 years and crossed the globe.

Mr. Roach met his wife, Flavia Gierin, while on assignment in San Francisco, Calif. They were married on July 23, 1955, in Bremerton, Wash. They raised five children during their military years.

Mr. Roach loved the Navy and especially enjoyed his years as a sea-going officer. He often said he was born to drive ships. While in the Navy he earned a master’s degree in electronics engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School in 1964, and was assigned to the Navy’s nuclear power program. He served as commanding officer for four tours, on the USS Duval County, USS San Bernardino, USS Saint Louis and as Commander of an amphibious squadron. He also served in three wars: World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Mr. Roach received 14 medals and ribbons during his career, including Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star and several



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distinguished service awards.

After retirement Mr. Roach worked for GTE in Sunnyvale, Calif. Until 1987. He later became a professional consultant specializing in government contract awards. He continued that work until the mid-1990s.

Throughout his life, he remained deeply involved with his Catholic faith. He was active in several parishes and served as a Catholic chaplain. After retirement, he continued that service, and eventually earned a second master's degree in pastoral studies from Seattle University. In his later years, he volunteered with the Diocese of Seattle, serving in its liturgical office and in a ministry to the homeless of Seattle. He also was involved with the Boy Scouts of America, as a volunteer for the Boys and Girls Club of Sequim, Wash, and numerous other organizations. He was well known for making intricate gingerbread houses at Christmastime for more than 40 years. He gave the legendary houses to family, friends and to children's hospitals, retirement homes and organizations associated with those in need. Mr. Roach also restored a historic farm in Sequim, Wash., that had been in his wife's family for more than 100 years.

Mr. Roach was preceded in death by his parents, his brother John Roach, and his sisters Rosemary Hall, Katherine Nelson and Patricia Atkins. He is survived by his wife, his brothers Thomas, Michael and James Roach; daughter Catherine Roach Grimes; sons Russell Francis Roach and wife Jo; Richard Gierin Roach and wife Diane; Eric Edward Roach and wife Leane; John Nicholas Roach and wife Gail; and by eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Mountain View Funeral Home in Lakewood, Wash., is handling arrangements. Mr. Roach's family held a private celebration of his life and he will be buried at sea with full military honors. His family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations in Mr. Roach's honor be made to the Boys and Girls Club of Sequim, Wash.; to Catholic Charities; or to another organization that serves those in need.



## Tribute Wall

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**Eric Roach** posted:

Condolences to Flavia, her children, and to all who were close to this remarkable, accomplished man. May uncle Frank find rest in His eternal peace.

December 13 at 5:37 AM



**Lise Visser** lit a candle in honor of Francis.



December 9 at 7:21 AM

**Lise Visser** December 9 at 7:23 AM

Dear Cathy and family, There goes another of the Greatest Generation. God bless Captain Roach, we are grateful to him for his service to our country. My prayers are with you.



**Kelly Rohrer** posted:

Condolences to my Aunt, Uncles, Cousins, Dad, and all those that had the fortune to have this wonderful man in their lives. Uncle, you will forever be in our hearts. Kelly, Brian, Aaron and Joseph Rohrer

December 9 at 1:12 AM



**Kit Leahy** posted:

Dear Flavia and Family, Frank will hold a very special place in my heart. I remember the gingerbread houses he constructed and distributed, during the holidays, here at the Chancery. He would also bring lavender, when it was harvested, for us all to enjoy. I will always think of Frank when I smell lavender. Frank was so accomplished. He was a spiritual, and giving man who loved Flavia and his family deeply. Always had a smile to share. I love the picture chosen for this sit. It captures him completely. My prayers and condolences to all of you.

December 8 at 5:19 AM



**Jim Roach** posted:

I will greatly miss the greatest and dedicated person of the family Miss You Brother Rest in peace with God above and wait it's not the end We'll meet again in heaven my brother and my friend. Brother Jim

December 7 at 8:28 AM



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JR

**Jim Roach** posted:

!I will greatly miss the greatest and dedicated person of the familyMiss You BrotherRest in peace with God above and wait it's not the endWe'll meet again in heaven my brother and my friend.Brother Jim

December 7 at 6:28 AM

AR

**Alan Roach** posted:

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Flavia and her children.Uncle Frank had a lasting impression on everyone who met him, especially members of the Roach family. He was an accomplished individual and role model to all.He will be missed.Alan, Cynthia, Nicholas and Melissa Roach

December 6 at 12:42 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Francis by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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