

CAROLINA MUSEUM OF THE MARINE

Meet the Marine. Be Inspired.

Bonds That Endure:

Service, Teamwork, and a Life Shared

Honoring Kathleen “Kathie” Eckert and LtCol Ronald R. Eckert, USMC (Ret)



For nearly six decades, Kathleen “Kathie” Eckert and her husband, Lt. Col. Ronald R. Eckert, USMC (Ret.), built a life grounded in faith, family, and service to others.

Their story began in 1961 at Easton's Beach in Newport, Rhode Island, where a chance meeting between a young lifeguard and a visiting college student became the foundation of a 58-year marriage. Together, they raised three daughters, embraced their role as grandparents—where Kathie was known affectionately as “Gigi”—and created a life rich in love, travel, and shared experiences.

Service was a defining thread throughout their lives. As a Marine Corps family, they understood both the demands and the meaning of service. Kathie devoted 37 years to a distinguished career in real estate, where she became known for her “Super Service with a Smile,” helping countless military families find homes and build lives of their own. Her work reflected the values that guided her life—integrity, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to others.

Together, Kathie and Ron made a significant gift to the Carolina Museum of the Marine, naming the General Al Gray Classroom. Their decision reflected not only their shared commitment to honoring the service of Marines and Sailors, but also their belief in inspiring future generations through leadership, character, and service.

In addition, Ron is contributing a collection of Marine Corps football artifacts and memorabilia that will be displayed within the classroom. These pieces reflect a connection he understands well—the enduring bond formed through teamwork, shared purpose, and mutual trust. Whether on the field or in the Marine Corps, those experiences shape individuals and forge lifelong connections rooted in discipline, accountability, and commitment to one another.

Kathie's faith was a steady and guiding presence throughout her life. She lived with humility, gratitude, and quiet strength, and she carried those qualities into every aspect of her life—her family, her work, and her community.

Those same qualities defined the life Ron and Kathie built together over 58 years of marriage—a partnership grounded in faith, trust, and unwavering devotion.

Earlier this year, Kathie was called home to the Lord. While her passing was unexpected, the legacy she and Ron established together endures.

Through the General Al Gray Classroom, their shared gift will continue to inspire all who enter—reflecting the values that defined Kathie’s life and the enduring partnership they built together.



Contributed photo: The family of LtCol Ron Eckert, USMC (Ret)