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December 25, 1938 - February 22, 2018

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Obituary for Jack Edwin Hamilton

Jack Hamilton, 79, of Branson, Missouri passed away on February 22, 2018 at the Shepherd of The Hills Living Center in Branson.

Born on December 25, 1938 in Burlington, Iowa to Cecil and Myrtle (Baird) Hamilton, Jack grew up in nearby Morning Sun, Iowa where he was an all-state athlete in four sports: baseball, basketball, football, and track.

On May 28, 1955, he married Janyce DeYarman, also from Morning Sun, in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. They had three children.

Straight out of high school, the St. Louis Cardinals offered Jack a contract, which he quickly signed just before the 1957 season, his first, began. Jack played on a number of minor league teams until he made his major league debut with the Philadelphia Phillies in 1962. He pitched as a starter or in relief for the Cardinals, Phillies, New York Mets, Detroit Tigers, Chicago White Sox, Cleveland Indians, and the California Angels.

Jack often pitched in short sleeves regardless of the weather and earned the nickname "Hairbreadth Harry" for, as the Syracuse Post Standard put it, "his miraculous escapes from the opposition in the face of overwhelming odds."

Jack was well known for his power, but was equally as well as well known for his difficulties with control. Harry Caray once said Jack “could throw a strawberry through a brick wall; if only he could hit the wall.” Jack was proud to say he never surrendered a home run to Hank Aaron.

Pitching for the Mets in May 1966, Jack threw a one-hit, complete-game shutout against the St. Louis Cardinals. The only hit the Cards managed that day was on a bunt single by pitcher Ray Sadecki. Jack only hit one career home run, but it was a remarkable one. It came in 1967 and made him only the second player in Mets history to ever hit a grand slam. No Met managed it again until Omir Santos did it in 2009.

Jack's entrepreneurial spirit off the field shone when he drove the team bus and sold sandwiches and sodas out of a cooler to his hungry and thirsty teammates. Naturally, when Jack retired from baseball in 1970, he and Jan opened their first restaurant, Jack's Clubhouse, in Morning Sun, Iowa. They owned restaurants in both Iowa and Illinois before moving to Branson, Missouri in 1986. Jack and Jan opened Jack & Tommy's restaurant at the height of the "boom". They then went on to own or operate the 19th Hole at Pointe Royale, the Pzazz restaurants, and Plaza View, all in Branson.

Most days, Jack would be found at the restaurant waiting tables, cooking in the kitchen, greeting guests, and

spending time with his family (who were also always at the restaurant). Jack retired from the restaurant and catering business in 2012 when he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. It also gave him more time to play cards, read the sports page, and watch baseball. Even in the offseason, Jack would watch hours of games from years and decades past. In 2016, he was finally able to see his Chicago Cubs win the World Series.

Jack is survived by his wife, Jan, of Branson; daughter Karla (Sarahjane) Hamilton of Rochester, Minnesota, son Kyle Jack (Kim) Hamilton of Branson, and son-in-law Wendell Langum, also of Branson; his sisters, Patsy Huddle of Wapello, Iowa, Janet Hall of Morning Sun, Iowa, and Judi (Paul) Delzell of Fulton, Illinois; four grandchildren, Jacki Langum (Pat Mobley), Gayla Ross (Terry Bowen), Dillon (Melody) Speers, and Kasey (Chris) Worthington; his great grandchildren; his beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins; and many card buddies, friends, customers, and teammates. He was preceded in death by his parents; his brother, Lonnie Hamilton; one sister, Cora Stotlar; his daughter, Kristi Langum; and his grandson, Travis "Lefty" Langum.

Memorial services will be held at 3:00 PM, Tuesday, February 27, 2018, at the Sanctuary of Hope Church in Branson with Pastor Sam Kaunley officiating. A celebration of life will take place later this year in Morning Sun, Iowa. Arrangements and cremation are under the direction of Greenlawn Funeral Home in Branson.

[Send a gesture of sympathy to Jack Edwin Hamilton's family \(/obituary/us/missouri/branson/greenlawn-funeral-home-branson/jack-hamilton/3433291/hfs/\)](#)



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Greenlawn Funeral Home, Inc.

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