



Vernon L Koelling

May 16, 1945 - July 20, 2025

Vernon L. Koelling, 80, passed away suddenly on July 20, 2025, in Grant Park, Illinois. Born on May 16, 1945, in Kankakee, Illinois, Vern was raised in Grant Park, where he was known as “Butch”, and graduated from Grant Park High School in 1963. After graduation, he ventured to southern California where he worked at the Beverly Hilton while attending National Technical School.

Vern began his professional journey with Raytheon Corporation, maintaining diesel engines—a role that took him overseas to the Philippines and Japan for several years. His work later brought him to Iran with Philco-Ford, where he maintained satellite communication systems. Upon returning to Grant Park, he continued his career with Allis Chalmers before joining Nissan Forklift as a regional service and parts manager. This position allowed him to travel extensively throughout the Midwest.

Vern enjoyed fishing on Lake Metonga, reading, watching golf, and was a member of several golf leagues. With his wife, he loved cruising and traveling internationally, including to Turkey, Egypt, Asia, and his ancestral home in Germany. He was also an active member of the Grant Park Historical Society.

Vernon is survived by his wife of 50 years, Shirley (nee Johnson), whom he married December 14, 1974; daughter, Kristin de Groot of Forest Park; son, Erik (Amanda) Koelling of Bradley; grandchildren, Nathan de Groot, Josephine de Groot, and Ava Koelling; sister, Bonnie Dunbar of Springfield, Missouri; several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Alfred and Hilda (nee Stuenkel) Koelling; sister, Shirley Ritter; brothers-in-law, David Ritter and Richard Dunbar, and infant brother Chester.

Visitation will be held at Zion Lutheran Church in Grant Park on Thursday, July 24, 2025, starting at 9:00am until the funeral service at 11:00am. Burial will be held at Zion Lutheran Cemetery immediately following the funeral service. Hack-Jensen Funeral Home in Beecher is handling the arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Zion Lutheran Cemetery

11456 N 11000E Road
Grant Park, IL 60940

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 24. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church
11456 N 11000E Rd
Grant Park, IL 60940-5067
(815) 361-0056

Funeral Service

JUL 24. 11:00 AM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church
Grant Park, IL

Tribute Wall

RY

“ Vern & I worked in the Philippines in the 60's ---I so enjoyed his dry wit. He was a great conversationalist--

RIP my friend,

My best to Shirley and the FAMILY.

Dick Young in the SLOW LANE remembering the fun times.

Richard Young - January 08 at 03:02 PM

GL

“ Grant Park Golf League purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Vernon L Koelling.



Grant Park Golf League - July 22, 2025 at 01:20 PM

VT

“ VA/CMS Team purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Vernon L Koelling.



VA/CMS Team - July 22, 2025 at 11:21 AM

VR

“ Vern was a great asset to the Historical Society serving the last few years when I joined as Vice President. Yearly the Historical Society would have a golf outing as a fund raiser. Vern was instrumental in getting sponsor signs installed and in charge of the challenges. In the last several years Vern drove the cart while I placed the sponsor signs as he knew the holes by memory. Many good memories were had with Him. He will be missed for his friendship and knowledge. Valgene Raloff

Valgene Raloff - July 22, 2025 at 10:16 AM



“ . purchased the *Days of Sunshine Bouquet* for the family of *Vernon L Koelling*.



. - July 21, 2025 at 10:23 PM



“ *Wednesday night golf league at the Elks.* purchased the *Peaceful White Lilies Basket* for the family of *Vernon L Koelling*.



Wednesday night golf league at the Elks. - July 21, 2025 at 05:31 PM



“ *de Groot Family* purchased the *Beautiful in Blue* for the family of *Vernon L Koelling*.



de Groot Family - July 20, 2025 at 07:28 PM