



David G. Cotts

June 4, 1937 - July 23, 2023

David George Cotts (born June 4, 1937), died peacefully at his residence in The Fairfax at Belvoir Woods, Fort Belvoir, Virginia on Sunday, July 23, 2023, lifted up by the love of family and friends.

Born in Menomonie, Wisconsin, the younger of two children of Don Cotts and Henrietta Brandt Cotts, Dave was reared with the small-town values that would guide him throughout his life--integrity, modesty, hard work, and service to others.

He attended Menomonie High School, where he excelled academically and athletically. Upon his graduation from high school in 1955, he was recognized with the Alumni Award as the top overall student in his class based on scholarship, athletic performance, citizenship, and leadership--a distinction he shared with his beloved older sister, Charlotte.

Dave was also active in the Boy Scouts. He attained the rank of Eagle Scout, served as a camp counselor, and represented the Boy Scouts of America as a Scout ambassador in Norway during the summer between his junior and senior years of high school. Dave internalized the Scout Law, lived by its tenets, and passed them along, by example, to his children and grandchildren.

During his senior year of high school, Dave received an appointment to the

United States Military Academy at West Point, in the Class of 1959. At 6' 2", Dave was one of the taller members of his class and was assigned to Company M-2, where he made life-long friends, as he was to do everywhere he went in the next 7 decades.

West Point was a perfect fit for Dave's talents, interests, competitive nature, and sense of duty. He graduated as the last man in the top quarter of his class (he never failed to emphasize "the last man" whenever anyone else would mention his class standing) and was commissioned a second lieutenant. Thus commenced a 22-year career in the Army Corps of Engineers that took him around the world, including assignments in the Republic of Korea, Nebraska, North Dakota, Kansas, back to West Point, West Germany, and the Washington DC area. Dave served two combat tours in the Republic of Vietnam and commanded the "Black Lions" of the 249th Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy), headquartered in Karlsruhe, West Germany.

In 1961, while assigned as a masters degree student at Iowa State University, in Ames, Iowa, Dave met the love of his life, Linda Carol Willard. Linda and Dave were perfectly matched. They shared a love of sports and the arts, a commitment to life-long learning, and most important, the small-town values that had shaped their lives. Dave proposed on Valentine's Day, 1962, and they were married in Linda's hometown of Pilot Mountain NC on June 2 of the same year.

They had 3 children: Chris, Eric, and Liza. As a family, they took every advantage the military offered to travel throughout Europe and the United States, skiing in the Alps, sampling the cuisine of Paris, visiting just about every castle in Germany, and, when Stateside, shuttling between Menomonie and Pilot Mountain for summer visits.

In 1981, Dave retired from the Army, having attained the rank of Colonel. His

final assignment was as the Chief, Combat Development for the Corps of Engineers, and he immediately began a second career as the Chief of Facilities Management for The World Bank in Washington DC.

During the next 17 years, Dave built and led an outstanding team that improved working conditions for thousands of Bank employees while reducing overall facility costs and, again, making lifelong friends. Dave became one of the most well-known and influential leaders in the facilities management field. Independently and with collaborators, he wrote 3 books on facilities management, all of which are still in print, and one of which, *The Facilities Management Handbook*, is considered the Bible of the facilities management discipline. He guided the development of degree and certificate programs at 3 universities, and was a founding member of the International Facilities Management Association (IFMA). He served as IFMA president and was inducted in the first class of IFMA fellows.

After he retired from the World Bank in 1998, Dave continued to write and teach. He was highly sought after as a speaker, mentor, and consultant. He and Linda traveled widely, including memorable trips to Russia, China, Canada, eastern Germany, and throughout the United States. Dave and Linda were also active in grassroots Republican party political organization, Lutheran church activities, and various charitable endeavors.

However, Dave's and Linda's most satisfying retirement activities--by a wide margin--centered around being grandparents. No "Grandma and Papa" have ever adored their grandchildren more than Dave and Linda loved their 5 wonderful grandkids: Stephen and Lauren Eller and Brendan, Meaghan, and Alaina Cotts.

Dave served as Linda's primary caregiver for several years, as dementia

claimed first her mind and, finally, her life. Following Linda's death in 2014, Dave continued to be a leader in his community, began a program to teach English as a Second Language for staff members of The Fairfax at Belvoir Woods, and thoroughly researched the genealogy of his and Linda's families. Dave's last two books, privately published, chronicled the generations of his and Linda's ancestors who immigrated from Europe and worked so hard in America to secure a better life for their descendants.

Among Dave's many military awards and decorations are the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star (with oak leaf cluster), the Meritorious Service Medal (with oak leaf cluster), and many others. Dave also earned the Army Parachutist Badge and the Ranger Tab.

Dave was preceded in death by his parents, Don and Henrietta, and his wife, Linda. He is survived by his sister, Charlotte Kohanek, of Menomonie, Wisconsin; his children, Chris Cotts of Alexandria, Virginia, Eric (Lisa) Cotts of San Diego, California, and Liza (Tim) Eller of Springfield, Virginia; and his grandchildren Stephen Eller, Brendan Cotts, Lauren Eller, Meaghan Cotts, and Alaina Cotts. Dave also maintained a close relationship with Andreas Cocq of Hamburg, Germany, who stayed with the Cotts family as an exchange student in the early 1980s.

Dave and Linda will be interred together at Arlington National Cemetery on a date yet to be determined. Should friends desire, the family suggests that contributions be directed to the Alzheimer's Association, 225 North Michigan Ave, FL. 17, Chicago IL 60601.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

1 Memorial Drive
Arlington, VA 22211

Events

Details are pending.

Tribute Wall

DK

“ We love Dave Cotts. there are many a memory that he shared with us either on his beautiful family or on his profession. He had the kindest heart! thank you for everything that he did!!!!!!!!!!!!!! thank you for his family!!!!!!!!!! Dean Kashiwagi and family love him!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Dean Takeo Kashiwagi - November 25, 2024 at 12:29 PM

VF

“ Rest in peace Mr. Cotts!
You were a great mentor to me during my internship and tenure with The World Bank in DC, 1983 - 1995. Your involvement in IFMA served as a role model for me and encouraged professional involvement in multiple design and facilities management related organizations. You also encouraged me to pursue teaching part time at Howard University in Interior Design.
It was great to experience first-hand your down to earth approach to management. Just thinking of your HOT, HOT HOT, and HOT HOT HOT post-it notes will always bring a smile to me, as you clearly indicated priorities for tasks assigned.
I was fortunate to experience you as an instructor later in my career at the Department of Homeland Security, where you taught a course on project management.
Our WI connection was strong, as I am from Milwaukee. We often discussed the mild winters in DC versus those in WI.
Thanks for leading by example.
You were dedicated to Linda, Don, and Henrietta, often bragging about their accomplishments.

Vincent G Carter, FASID - November 06, 2023 at 08:59 AM

FT

“ *RIP Dave.*



Frank Titus - August 05, 2023 at 04:12 PM

CA

“ *Chris, Eric and Liza, We are saddened to learn that your Dad has left this earthly life, but rejoice that he is in heaven with your Moother. Your Dad was special to us as we remember many years singing together in the choir at St. John's and then his visit with us after we moved to Williamsburg. May you be comforted by the grace of Almighty God. Blessings, Ron and Cecie Adolphi*

Celia L Adolphi - July 30, 2023 at 04:20 PM

LK

“ *Our sincere condolences on the loss of your father. Take some comfort knowing that your parents have been reunited and are holding hands in Heaven. Gentle hugs to you and your family.*
Lisa Koren and Family



Lisa Koren - July 28, 2023 at 06:49 PM

JA

“ *Eric and family*
My deepest sympathies to you and your family during your time of grief
Janice Garner



Janice - July 28, 2023 at 01:43 PM