



Otto J. Guenther

June 12, 1941 - October 14, 2021

LTG Otto J. Guenther, US Army, Retired, of Fairfax Station, Virginia passed away on Thursday, October 14, 2021. He is survived by his loving wife of 55 years, Jan Guenther, beloved daughters, Tracy Ritch (Rob) and Debbie Heard (Kennon), adored sister, Barbara Guenther, and cherished grandchildren; Shelby, Ryan, Kylie, Kennon, Sammy, and Ali. Otto is preceded in death by his parents, Otto and Ruth Guenther.

Otto was born and raised in Red Bank, New Jersey and graduated from Red Bank High School, class of 1959. He attended McDaniel College, class of 1963. Upon completing the ROTC program at McDaniel College, he was commissioned in the US Army Signal Corps as a Second Lieutenant. He proudly served in many assignments both in the continental United States and overseas ultimately rising to the rank of Lieutenant General. As a Signal Corps officer, Otto served in both the Korean and Vietnam theaters of operation and commanded the 102nd Signal Battalion, 5th Signal Command in Germany. Later in the new US Army Acquisition Corps, Otto was entrusted with the procurement, management and deployment of many critical warfighter enhancements to include Combat Net Radios- SINCGARS, Mobile Subscriber Equipment (MSE), GPS, and other military satellite communications equipment. Throughout his distinguished military service, he tirelessly worked to support our troops in the field. He led organizations to innovate and integrate a wide array of technologies so that combat leaders

could share common operating information throughout America's battlefields. Otto Guenther's military career culminated with promotion to Lieutenant General and assignment as the US Army's first ever Chief Information Officer-CIO/ G6. Upon retirement from active duty service, LTG (ret) Guenther joined the private sector and worked as an industry leader with Computer Associates International, and TRW/Northrup Grumman. Throughout his life, Otto Guenther has been a dedicated servant of both his Church and his alma mater. At Christ Church, he held many leadership positions throughout the past twenty-six years. Dedicated to the progress of McDaniel College, he served in many positions on the Board of Trustees culminating in his selection as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. He led the Board of Trustees until October 7, 2021.

A dedicated family man, Otto enjoyed many memorable times with his family and friends at his house in Florida, and loved vacationing in Maine and at Smith Mt. Lake, VA. Upon retirement from his professional life, Otto enjoyed and finessed the art of shopping at Costco and the Commissary. His favorite meals were lobster and crab cakes! After retirement, he and his wife Jan were able to travel to many exciting places throughout the world and he always found time to practice and improve his golf game.

A Celebration of Life will be held on November 15, 2021 at 11:00 at Christ Church in Fairfax Station, Virginia. A ceremony for his military service will be held at Arlington National Cemetery. Details for the service at Arlington National Cemetery will be updated once scheduled. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that a donation be made to either Christ Church or the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network in Otto's honor.

Cemetery Details

Arlington National Cemetery

1 Memorial Drive
Arlington, VA 22211

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

NOV 15. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Christ United Methodist Church
7600 Ox Road
Fairfax Station, VA 22039

Tribute Wall

JB

“ *In the summer of 1966 he came to Fort Ritchie Maryland as our company commander. I was working at Site R and made E-5 while he was there. He was definitely Professional in every way. So sorry to hear of his passing. Your family has my deepest sympathy..*



John Berard - January 10, 2025 at 11:51 AM



“ *Otto J. Guenther*

October 27, 2022 at 09:45 PM

CC

“ *Prayers and sincere condolences to Jan and others dear to Otto. He was a great and humble man whom I and many others respected for stepping up to lead and inspire in difficult times. Otto was a true gift to his alma mater. As a fellow alum and trustee, I was blessed to have known and served with him. May you rest in peace for countless tasks well executed. Carol Armacost Carter, McDaniel College '69*

Carol A Carter - November 17, 2021 at 06:37 PM

CS

“ *My most sincere condolences. I know he will be sorely missed. I enjoyed greatly getting to know him and working with him at McDaniel. He was a great friend and colleague. May you feel God's peace and grace as you reflect on your love for him and his outstanding life.*

Chuck Sullivan - November 12, 2021 at 08:19 PM

FA

“ A wonderful man, much loved by all. Glad I got to meet him <3

Faith - November 08, 2021 at 08:55 AM

LK

“ I worked at Fort Monmouth when he was there. I remember him as being very nice to everyone, and approachable. I'm sad for his passing....may he Rest In Peace.

Linda Kierstein - October 27, 2021 at 08:47 AM

KI

“ May Our LORD be with all of you during these times of great loss. But always know that your are never alone. Our Father in Heaven is always with you. Eugene and Bonnie Kitzmiller

Kitzmiller - October 18, 2021 at 07:09 PM

CJ

“ Dear Jan, Tracy, and Debbie,

I will never be able to express how blessed I feel to have had Otto in my life, both personally and professionally, over the past decade and a half. He was always there to support and encourage me, either with his words or his "size 12" motivator. He was the epitome of a servant-leader, who lived his life with grace, humility, courage, and strength.

*In Peace and Love,
Chip Junkin*

Chip Junkin - October 18, 2021 at 10:33 AM

DW

When Otto came to Western Maryland (McDaniel) in 1959 I was his honorary "Big Brother". At the end of his freshman year I apparently said "Otto if you apply yourself you could really excel", he repeated this statement at an ROTC commissioning. Pointing at me he said; 'that's the man who counseled me'! Yes Otto you did that and then some! He was a super person, great friend and wonderful leader and mentor to many. His leadership at WMC will be missed. God bless him and his family. The heavens just received a very special ANGEL!

Dr. Don Rabus, Prof. Emeritus WMC - October 19, 2021 at 10:53 AM

KF

It has been such a blessing to have Otto in my life, as boss, fellow attendee at Christ Church, and dear friend. He made a difference in my life in so many ways. There are not words to express how much I, and so many others, have benefited from his mentoring, wise counsel and caring friendship. I will miss you, dear friend!

Kathy Finigan

Kathy Z Finigan - October 19, 2021 at 11:36 AM

VC

Otto Guenther was a great soldier, but most importantly, a great husband, father, and friend to his wife and family. A better officer and Christian gentleman never walked this earth. His friendship and love to all will always be treasured. Thank you, Otto. Vince Collier

Vince Collier - October 19, 2021 at 11:11 PM

PB

Some of my favorite memories of working in and around the Pentagon were when I got to work with General Guenther. He was a great leader, listener, thinker and problem solver - He was just a joy to brainstorm with. I have so much respect for the General and will always remember his amazing personality, humor and creativity! His family should be immensely proud of the difference he made in his life and career - his notable and frequent contributions left Team USA/DoD much better than when he found it. To his family - thank you so much for sharing him with his former colleagues who greatly valued his leadership; commitment to the cause; and friendship. Thank you Otto! Most sincerely, Paul Brubaker

Paul Brubaker - October 20, 2021 at 12:12 PM

MD

I was blessed to become friends with Otto when he joined the Board of Trustees of McDaniel College. Otto's love for the College and natural leadership distinguished him, culminating in his election as Chair of the Board. Otto shone brightly and led brilliantly in that role, helping McDaniel make tremendous strides. He taught us to lead, to befriend, value and trust one another, and to share leadership in new ways. His commitment was unwavering to the end. His profile is courage itself.
Mary Lynn Durham.

Mary Lynn Durham - October 20, 2021 at 12:28 PM

SM

Otto was a remarkable, generous, and loving man, who brought humility, joy, and faith to everything he did and all that he led. I first met Otto when we both joined the Board of Trustees of McDaniel College. I came to know him as a gentle leader, one whose deep respect for everyone and tireless service to the mission of his efforts was profoundly effective and lasting.

Colleges and Universities are remarkably unique institutions, often challenged by resources, governance, and a balance of independent thought and shared community; Otto was a perfect blend of thoughtful and gentle leadership as our Chairman of the Board, who not only effectively led through the pandemic, but also through the transition of presidents, ushering in and inaugurating a new leader for McDaniel and a re-newed sense of mission, which will stand for years to come. It was a privilege for me to have known Otto and to have worked with him.

Sherry Manning

Sherry Manning - October 20, 2021 at 02:58 PM

NS

What a treasure Otto was, a truly good soul ! He will be missed ! Nancy Saunders

Nancy Saunders - October 20, 2021 at 03:00 PM

GE

Our memories of LTG Guenther go back to his days at Fort Monmouth where he commanded respect and admiration by all those who had the pleasure of meeting him. Our sincere condolences to the entire Guenther family. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Gary Estler - October 21, 2021 at 08:43 PM

CL

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve on the Board of Trustees of McDaniel College with Otto. As Chairman in recent years, he led the board brilliantly enabling us to address critical issues of pedagogical value (for which the college was recognized with the John Nason award from AGB in 2020), diversity-equity-inclusion (so important to students today), the COVID-19 Pandemic, and senior leadership transition. How fortunate we have been to know him and work with him! Rest in peace, Otto.

Carolyn Landis - October 22, 2021 at 06:16 PM

WK

*Started my military career as a 2Lt in his battalion. A great Army officer. Sorry to hear of his passing.
Wayne and Debra Keen
Somersworth NH*

Wayne Keen - May 14, 2023 at 06:13 PM