



## Eldon Wahlers

November 2, 1932 - June 14, 2023

“A Quiet Professional, Patriot, Mentor, Hero, and Friend whose deeds inspired us to exceed our own expectations of ourselves.” Stuart Wahlers

Professor and Senior Master Sergeant (United States Air Force Retired)

Eldon Delmar Wahlers entered into God’s Kingdom on the evening of June 14, 2023.

Born on 2 November 1932 in Perry County Missouri at the height of the Great Depression to Edwin Martin Wahlers and Lorena Elizabeth Wahlers (formerly Weinrich), he and his sister Ruby (later Ruby Kasten) quickly matured as they were exposed to the harsh economic realities of the time; consequently, they became essential and productive members of the family at a very young age as they contributed to the daily survival of their family. When he wasn’t assisting his father with the tilling, the harvest, the livestock, the harvest, and the daily chores and repairs associated with a small non-mechanized farm, he was augmenting the family’s income by cutting and selling firewood, laboring on nearby farms, and trapping, skinning, and treating animal fur for sale, all the while attending school.

After graduating from school, while continuing to work on the farm, he also worked for the electric company clearing stretches of forest and bogs, where he and his crew dug deep holes, and then manually filled them with long

creosote-soaked wooden poles and dirt as the linemen followed behind to bring electricity and telephone service to remote and rural areas of the mid-west for the first time. Albeit, it was very physically demanding work, he enjoyed it; however, whenever he regaled us with stories from that era, he with a gleam in his eyes, would caveat the story with, "Up to that point, I thought I had seen my share of snakes, but the rattle snakes I saw out there were thick, fast and grumpy...and everywhere!" The on-set of the Korean War, combined with his sense of patriotism and the potential for a career in the military provided him the opportunity to seek new horizons beyond the farm, learn new skills, and travel to exotic lands, where he would eventually meet his bride, Christel (Hosse) Wahlers, whom he wed in 1956.

Having survived the Depression and growing-up on the farm prepared him for the rigors of military life, where he would serve with distinction throughout The Cold War, as it vacillated between Korea, Berlin, Cuba, Vietnam, and Persia. He would serve in the military for another 23 years. By 1975, his strong work ethic, combined with his unique skills, and numerous successes attracted the attention of his superiors, who offered him the opportunity to serve at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, USSR. Instead of embracing this career-enhancing opportunity, he filed his retirement paperwork, stating he could not expose his family to that environment. Although many of his peers and even some of his superiors wanted that assignment, his love for, and the safety of, his family was more important to him than a promotion.

Throughout his military career and before the advent of "on-line learning," and in-between his deployments to austere and dangerous environments, he would apply for correspondence courses aka the military's proverbial dreaded "box of books." When he returned home from those exhausting trips, he would study late into the night, return to work in the morning, and then complete another portion the next evening. Despite his very demanding schedule, he found the time to hike, fish, and go exploring with his sons, attend their

sporting events, teach them essential skills, and mentor them. His superiors would eventually grant him the opportunity to attend night school after work. In those days, enlisted men had to obtain your commander's approval to attend night school, to get married to a foreigner, attend military training, and more.

His superiors quickly recognized his potential and the benefits they and their organizations were reaping from his budding educational pursuits; especially, after he developed products for the Nixon-Ford Administration that shaped policies that are still in effect today. Even then, instead of accepting the credit himself, he deferred to his team and gave them the credit. He always felt that praise should be shared and administered publicly. He took pride in his work and as he would occasionally remind his sons, "you are known by your deeds, not by your words". As was his nature, he was quietly setting the example for his sons to emulate. He never asked them or anyone else to do anything that he wasn't willing to do himself. Later, his superiors would provide him the opportunity to attend day-time courses at the University of Maryland, while he simultaneously continued to produce quality superlative products for the organization and the Nation he loved.

His quest for knowledge was a life-long passion. After serving a full career in the military, he continued his studies. He would earn several degrees and initially serve as an adjunct professor at the University of Missouri in Columbia, and, then a few years later serve as a tenured professor at Central Methodist University in Fayette, Missouri, where he would teach for almost four decades. He truly found his niche at Central and did not consider it work. He loved his students, his role as a mentor, and enjoyed learning from, and talking to, the students and his colleagues. During that time at Central, he developed products that enhanced children's abilities to learn and retain foreign languages. His research and publications were recognized by foreign language instructors worldwide, including teachers living behind the Iron

Curtain, who invited him to attend a conference in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) during the 1980s to discuss his methods and techniques. Later, his research, methods, and achievements were recognized by the late Governor Carnahan in Jefferson City.

Herbert Hoover was President when Eldon was born. During his ninety years, he learned how to be a farmer, contributed to the electrification and modernization of his family's farm and communities throughout the Mid-West, he corresponded with and knew Spanish-American War and World War I Veterans, witnessed the building and eventual destruction of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain, worked with Doctor Werner von Braun during the Space Race, experienced indoor plumbing, bought his first television, bought a home, raised a family, had two fulfilling careers, and witnessed society's transition into the Computer Age.

He rarely accepted assistance; yet he would immediately help those in distress. Despite his many accomplishments, he was always humble, of good cheer, loved his family, and grateful for the simple things in life. He never lost sight of where he had come from or the people who had assisted him. He meant what he said and even though he rarely spoke, preferring to listen instead before offering a comment, but when he did speak sound wisdom flowed across his lips. His word was indeed his bond.

He enjoyed the solitude and rhythm of working in his garden. Every year, he would grow more than he and his wife could ever preserve or consume. He did it for the Zen of seeing the efforts of his labors unfold in front of him and being able to share much of his annual harvest with his neighbors and colleagues. He did not waiver in his beliefs or shed his values for popular trends. We are saddened by his departure, but rejoice in having known him and to have learned from him. Our lives were enriched as a result of him being in ours. Until we meet again.

He is survived by his sister Ruby Kasten, his wife Christel, his sons Stuart E. Wahlers (Colonel Retired US Army) and Ralph B. Wahlers and his wife Mi-Jung, his grandsons Chief Master Sergeant Zachary S. Wahlers and his wife Rachel, Lieutenant Luke M. Wahlers and his wife Anna, and Jakob B. Wahlers, his granddaughters Stephanie, Rhyanna E.A. and Anya, and his great grandchildren Annabelle, Maximus, and Quaid Wahlers.

Visitation will be from 8:00 am to 10:00 am on Saturday, July 1, 2023, at Ford Young Funeral Home in Perryville.

Funeral Service will follow at 10:00 am with the Rev. Paul Winningham officiating.

Burial will be at Zion Lutheran Cemetery in Longtown with Military Honors provided by the United States Air Force Honors Team.

Online condolences may be made at [www.fordandyoungfuneralhome.com](http://www.fordandyoungfuneralhome.com).

Ford Young Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

“Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped into the next room... whatever we were to each other that we still are.” - Henry Scott Holland

# Cemetery Details

## Zion Lutheran Cemetery

Crosstown, MO

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 1. 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Ford and Young Funeral Home  
110 S. West St.  
Perryville, MO 63775

## Funeral Service

JUL 1. 10:00 AM (CT)

Ford and Young Funeral Home  
110 S. West St.  
Perryville, MO 63775

## Graveside Service

JUL 1. 11:00 AM.

Zion Lutheran Cemetery  
Longtown, MO

# Tribute Wall



“ I've only just read of Mr. Wahlers passing. Heartfelt condolences to his family and especially to Stuart, who clearly inherited his beloved father's finest qualities. May he continue to live in the hearts of those he left behind. Yvette Martin

Yvette Martin - January 04, 2024 at 08:22 PM



“ Eldon Wahlers

October 20, 2023 at 02:54 AM



“ Eldon Wahlers

October 20, 2023 at 01:44 AM



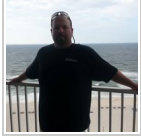
“ I was one of Prof. Wahlers' work-study students when I was at CMC. He was a kind and gentle man whose scholarship and compassion taught me more than I can express. I will always remember him and be grateful to have learned from him.

Rachel Hartman - July 20, 2023 at 09:30 AM



“ My sister shared this obituary. I read it. What an amay man. What an amazing life. A true American hero.

Rita Marie Lewis - July 04, 2023 at 11:35 AM



“ *The first time that I met Eldon, I was an 8 year old child at Daly Elementary in Fayette, Mo. Mr. Wahlers had come to our second grade class to give us a few lessons in German language. Fast forward a few years and I was a young adult attending services at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church and I got to meet Eldon all over again. I remembered exactly who he was, and over the following years he taught me the correct way to pronounce a few more things in German, including my paternal great great grandfather's surname. I will always have fond memories of Eldon as I began serving on the church council with him. I will remember him as a caring gentle soul whom listened to what someone had to say and offered good advice in those situations. I'm glad that I had an opportunity to meet and know Eldon a little while; he was a good man. God Bless,*  
*-Robbie Gibson*

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**Robbie Gibson** - July 02, 2023 at 10:17 PM

JA

“ *I knew Eldon (and Christel) through Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran church in Fayette. He also taught German to my children when they were in elementary school. My son went on to minor in German in college and now lives in Munich. The only exposure my son had to the German language prior to that was through Eldon. He was always soft spoken, kind and readily shared a welcoming smile. As noted in his obituary, he led by example and what a fine life he lived!! My condolences.*

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**Jan Asbury** - July 01, 2023 at 08:30 AM

VB

“ *Whoever wrote this obituary did an excellent job. I did not know Mr. Wahlers, but reading his obituary, I certainly learned what an outstanding and remarkable man he was. Prayers and blessing to the family.*

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**varbara Breig** - July 01, 2023 at 07:58 AM

KL

*I am so sorry for the family's loss and I am sending blessings and prayers to all during this very difficult time.*

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**Kathy Leedham** - July 02, 2023 at 06:13 AM

LK

“ *So very glad to have had such a kind professor, advisor, and mentor. I will treasure my memories of his humor and the support I needed to move forward in my education and career goals. Lisa (Schmidt) Kincaid, CMU '93 B.A. German*

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**Lisa A Kincaid** - June 30, 2023 at 09:39 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Eldon Wahlers.*

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June 30, 2023 at 01:11 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Eldon Wahlers.*



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June 30, 2023 at 01:11 PM



“ 2 files added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Ford and Young Funeral Home - June 30, 2023 at 09:34 AM**