



Herman Oetjen, Jr.

December 13, 1936 - March 1, 2026

Herman Oetjen, Jr.

Born December 14, 1936, in Irvington, New Jersey, passed away on March 1, 2026, at the age of 89. After graduating from Irvington High School in 1954, Herman left New Jersey and moved to Tampa, Florida, where he joined the United States Navy. During his time in the Navy, he traveled to the Mediterranean twice and visited Spain, Germany, France and Italy while serving aboard the USS Tacoma. He was honorably discharged in 1957. Missing military life, Herman joined the United States Air Force in November 1958. He served proudly until his retirement in October 1974. In the spring of 1963, he met Mary Ellen Kilgore. They were married in September of that year and began a life of travel and service together.

Their first assignment took them to Okinawa, Japan, where their daughter Cindy was born. Later, they were stationed in Sumter, South Carolina, where their son Trey was born. During a four-year tour in Turkey, they traveled throughout Europe and the Middle East, embracing the opportunities military life provided.

After retiring from the Air Force, Herman and Mary settled in Indianapolis. Herman worked for the RCA Record Club, the United States Postal Service, and the family-owned dry-cleaning business. Determined to continue learning, he completed his college education and earned a master's degree from Indiana Wesleyan College. He was a member of Sertoma and delivered Meals on Wheels for many years.

In retirement, Herman devoted himself to what mattered most to him: family. He rarely missed a play, basketball game, baseball game, dance recital, or volleyball match. He was his grandchildren's biggest supporter and took great pride in each of them. Herman was also a lifelong lover of country music. He often shared lists of songs he thought others "ought to hear" always eager to pass along a favorite tune.

Visitation will be Wednesday, March 4, 2026 from 11:00 a.m. until the time of service at 2:00 p.m. at Shirley Brothers Washington Memorial Chapel, 9606 East Washington Street. For those unable to attend the service will be livestreamed and available by clicking on the following link: <https://client.tribucast.com/tcid/a26032114668069>

Herman is survived by his daughter, Cynthia; his son and daughter-in-law, Trey and Lori Oetjen; eight grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren, Caleb and Taylor Oetjen (Emmalyn Jo, Addisyn James, and Halle Ann), Madison (née Oetjen) and Matthew Beaty (Selah Rae, Naomi Kay, and Miriam Rose), Josiah and Micah Oetjen (Bryson James), Noah and Mallory Oetjen (Noah Jackson, Wesley Klay, and Hudson Josiah), Hope Oetjen, Isaiah Oetjen, Angela Oetjen, and Elijah Oetjen. He is also survived by co-grandpa, Brownlow Couch. Herman was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Mary Ellen Oetjen; and sister, Adele Herter.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the MOM house at Heather Hills Baptist Church.

Cemetery Details

Arlington East Hill Cemetery

6350 US 52
Arlington, IN 46104

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 4. 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Shirley Brothers Washington Memorial Chapel
9606 E. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46229
(317) 897-9606
<https://shirleybrothers.com/>

Funeral Service

MAR 4. 2:00 PM (ET)

Shirley Brothers Washington Memorial Chapel
9606 E. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46229
(317) 897-9606
<https://shirleybrothers.com/>

Tribute Wall

FD

“ Thoughts and prayers for the family during this loss of a very important man in your family.
I wish I could have gotten to know him and hear some of the stories !

Faith Davis - March 03 at 06:23 PM



“ Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of Herman Oetjen, Jr..



March 03 at 09:55 AM



“ Blue Caribbean Bouquet was purchased for the family of Herman Oetjen, Jr..



March 02 at 11:32 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Herman Oetjen, Jr..



March 02 at 05:35 PM

BS

“ *Barbara Smith purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Herman Oetjen, Jr..*



Barbara Smith - March 02 at 05:08 PM

BS

“ *Barbara Smith planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Herman Oetjen, Jr..*

Barbara Smith - March 02 at 05:08 PM

GG

“ *I am so sorry for your loss!! 💜 Herman was such a hoot! He would bring his grandchildren to their piano lessons, often leaving to go deliver Meals in Wheels, and returning to share stories about his passion and love: being with his family and helping others. He was truly an inspiration and will be missed by so many! Love and hugs to his family as they grieve!! 💜🙏*

Gina Goshen - March 02 at 01:27 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Herman Oetjen, Jr..*



March 02 at 12:30 PM



“ *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Herman Oetjen, Jr..*



March 02 at 10:44 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Herman Oetjen, Jr..*



March 02 at 10:35 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Herman Oetjen, Jr..*

March 02 at 10:35 AM