



CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LOVE OF  
*John “Johnny” Meier*

February 17, 1951 - December 13, 2025



Those of us who were lucky enough to know John Meier will remember him as a fun-loving, hard-working, and friendly guy. He had a spirit for adventure, always willing to try something new. He loved to travel, explore new hobbies, and spend time outdoors. Camping was a favorite activity. Sitting by the campfire in the evening with a drink in hand telling stories was perfection to him. This is when you would hear him say, "It don't get no better than this!" His favorite stories were "Bloody Buckets" and "Big Ol' Daddy Catfish". His animated telling kept everyone entertained. He didn't mind acting goofy or silly. That just added to his charm.

Professionally he was known as John, but within the family he was affectionately known as Johnny.

Johnny was born on February 17, 1951 in Covington, Kentucky. His parents were Clarence "Bud" and Mariella Meier. He was the second eldest with siblings; Bob, Joe, Terry, Mary Anne, Susan, and Jim. He attended St. Anthony Elementary School through sixth grade and then attended Covington Latin School. He always spoke fondly of his childhood. The neighborhood children would congregate in the Meier yard playing backyard games and shooting hoops. Even as a young child, he enjoyed outdoor activities. Fishing with his dad was a favorite pastime that he continued to love throughout his life.

Johnny had a special place in his heart for his Grandma Wilson. During his years as a student at Covington Latin School he lived with her. This was partly due to the fact that his Aunt Dodie, who lived with her mother, worked at Latin School and could provide easy transportation back and forth to school. But it was also because he could escape the chaos of growing up with so many siblings. The quiet that his grandmother's house provided allowed him to focus on his education. He worked hard and dedicated himself to his studies. Upon graduation in 1967, he was awarded a small scholarship to Thomas More College. At the age of 16, he began his college years, majoring in Biology and earning his degree in 1971.

Johnny and Donna's story began in 1967. Their first date was his graduation from Covington Latin School. Although they were both 16, she was entering her junior year at Notre Dame Academy and he was about to begin his studies at Thomas More. Who could have guessed then that their first date would lead to a love story that spanned 58 years?

Johnny continued his education at the University of Kentucky, receiving his Master's Degree in Microbiology. On June 22, 1974, Johnny and Donna were married and began building a life together in Lexington, Kentucky.



In 1976, they welcomed their son, Jason. Three years later, their daughter, Emily, was born. What a joy fatherhood brought to him! He loved his kids and became completely engaged in the role of “Daddy”. He attended all of their school and sports functions. It didn’t matter if it was soccer or dance recitals. He was there for it all. He even coached Jason’s little league baseball team.



In 1980 the family moved from Lexington to Villa Hills. Life was busy during those early years, but that didn’t stop Johnny from pursuing his dream. Even though he was raising two children and working full time at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), he decided he was not finished with his education. He was used to working hard to achieve his goals and so with determination he decided to pursue a Ph.D. In 1993, he completed work at University of Cincinnati and was awarded a Ph.D. in Toxicology. At the EPA, he served as a Research Toxicologist for more than three decades (1980-2011). After retiring he continued part-time work there for several more years. Throughout his life, he was deeply committed to environmental causes.



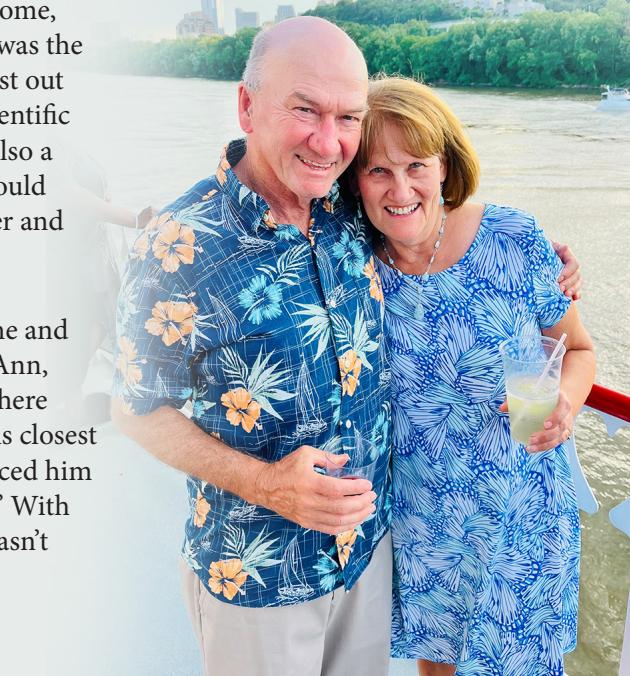
At the age of 28, shortly before Emily was born, Johnny was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. Refusing to let it define or limit him, he devoted himself to learning everything he could about the condition. His deep understanding and careful management of his illness also enabled him to support his brother Terry when he received the same diagnosis later on.



Johnny loved to keep busy. His interests were wide and varied. His hobbies included skiing, golfing, gardening, salsa dancing and travel, especially to America’s national parks. Just a few short months ago he took a hiking trip to Nova Scotia with Jason and Emily. As soon as he came home, he was ready to plan his next trip. Within the family, he was the designated bartender. He loved finding new recipes to test out on the family and approached his drink making with scientific precision, carefully measuring each ingredient. He was also a beloved uncle. He was asked by two of his nieces if he would officiate their weddings, so he became a certified minister and presided over the ceremonies.



Johnny made many life-long friends over the years and he and Donna enjoyed traveling with couples; Mark and Mary Ann, Tom and Denise, and Dave and Carol. It didn’t matter where they went, it was just a fun group to be part of. One of his closest friends was Rhonda, a coworker at the EPA. She introduced him to salsa dancing. He once told Donna, “It’s in my blood!” With the exception of skydiving and bungee jumping, there wasn’t much that he wouldn’t try.



Once he set his mind to something, he was determined. He decided he wanted to run a marathon and eventually finished fifteen of them.

Johnny was very close with his granddaughters, Avery and Scarlett, who affectionately know him as a “Papa Johnny”. He loved spending time with them and happily played Barbies and acted out the Disney stories with them. He sang silly songs to them, played games with them, and tried to engage them in the things he cared about. When it came time to plant his vegetable garden, he had them paint and decorate the fencing. They named it the “Papa Patch.” They loved spending time with him.

Life was good, but then suddenly in October, he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. He had surgery on November 4, but had many setbacks while trying to recover, and passed away on December 13. He will be remembered for his joy for life and his love for his family.

