



Emmett G. O'Brien



On the evening of October 1, 2023, Emmett passed away peacefully at the Marshfield Medical Center Hospital in Eau Claire, WI after a 19-month battle with cancer. Emmett was 81 years old.

Emmett was an intellectual freethinker, and he displayed these character traits early on in his childhood. He was born in Rockford, IL and was the second child of George & Virginia O'Brien. Emmett spent his early childhood living in Chicago, IL on the northeast side in an Irish neighborhood. His elementary school attendance was not exemplary as he often just walked off

the school grounds during morning recess. Once he was escorted back to school by someone in the neighborhood, Emmett would simply tell the nuns that he was going to grow up to be a cowboy, and cowboys didn't need to go to school.

Emmett and his family later moved to Racine, WI where he graduated from St. Catherine's High School. Emmett was a skilled athlete; he placed 2nd in the state of Wisconsin in the discus throw, earned All-City Milwaukee football honors as a Center, and was awarded a football scholarship to St. Norbert College.

Emmett left St. Norbert College to fulfill his selective service requirement and enlisted in the Army. He became a marksman and a paratrooper and served with both the 82nd and 101st Airborne units while stationed in Europe. He experienced combat while serving in West Berlin, Germany; his job was to protect civilians that had scaled the newly constructed Berlin Wall and ensure that they survived the dash across no-man's land to freedom in West Berlin. Emmett finished his active duty as an MP, and fulfilled his service as a drill instructor for soldiers who would be sent to Vietnam.

Emmett was Honorably Discharged from the Army in 1966 and returned to college; first at UW Parkside and then at UW Eau Claire where he graduated with a degree in psychology. He met the love of his life Libby while attending UW Eau Claire; Emmett and Libby were married in 1968. Emmett earned his master's degree in counseling from Stout State College in 1970 and spent his career as a Student Services Counselor



at Chippewa Valley Technical College where he was passionate about helping students overcome obstacles and disabilities in their pursuit of higher learning. Emmett retired from CVTC in 1998.

During retirement, Emmett discovered a passion for nature photography. Some of his favorite places to photograph were national parks located in Hawaii, New Mexico, and Wyoming; but his favorite scenery was in his home state of Wisconsin in places like Eau Claire (Carson Park), Bayfield, and Door County.

Emmett loved being around young children because he could easily relate to them. He, like them, was not cynical. He, like them, spoke with a soft tone and met the world each day with kindness, curiosity, and a thirst for knowledge. He fully believed in unconditional love and that all human beings ought to practice it and share it with each other.

Above all, Emmett loved his family. He loved holding his grand-babies and spending time with them as they grew into young adults. He loved his daughter-in-law as his own. He loved his son, and because of the life lessons Emmett taught him, he is his son's hero.

Emmett absolutely, with all of his heart and soul, loved his wife Libby. He was devoted to her for 55 years, and she was the center of his universe. He was a sweet gentleman who will be missed dearly by his family and those who knew him.

Emmett is survived by: Libby (wife), Sean (son), Christine (daughter in-law), Shea (granddaughter), Brennan (grandson), and Mark (brother).

Emmett was preceded in death by: George (father), Virginia (mother), Michael (brother), and Robert (brother).

Emmett's open house visitation & celebration of life will be held on Friday, October 20th from 2pm through 5pm at Stokes, Prock & Mundt Funeral Chapel, 535 S. Hillcrest Parkway, Altoona, WI.

In lieu of flowers or memorials, Emmett and his family request that you consider making a donation to The Wounded Warrior Project.

Cremation Society of Wisconsin, Altoona is assisting the family. Online condolences may be shared at www.cremationsociety-wi.com.