



## Eugene Leonard Drifmeyer

March 12, 1928 - October 30, 2025

The staff of Heishman Funeral Home Inc., Heishman Funeral Service sends condolences to the family of Eugene Leonard Drifmeyer.

Eugene Leonard Drifmeyer, son of Raymond and Mildred Berkemeier Drifmeyer, passed away peacefully on October 30, 2025 at his home at The Warren in Woodstock, Virginia. Gene was predeceased by his wife of 75 years, Helen Elaine Rullmann Drifmeyer. He is survived by one half-brother, Chester Drifmeyer.

In the year 2020, Gene was predeceased by his firstborn son, Jeffrey Eugene Drifmeyer.

Gene and Helen were blessed with six children, Jeffrey Eugene (Gina) of Nashville, TN, Kenneth Ray (Gail) of Westminster, CO, Sally Elaine Drifmeyer Mielcarek of Edinburg, VA, Polly Jean Drifmeyer Ashby (Jay) of Edinburg, VA, Barrett Henry of Culpeper, VA, Matthew Brian (Pam) of Warrenton, VA.

Helen and Gene welcomed seven grandchildren: Jeremy (Kristin) Mielcarek of Hagerstown, MD, Amanda (Eric) Bryan of Littleton, CO, Erin (Dave) Moga of Blaine, MN, Emily (Chris) Crossman of New Midway, NC, Douglas (Stacey) Drifmeyer of Littleton, CO, Julie (Patrick) Shaffner of Nashville, TN and Claire (Sarah) Ashby of Waynesboro, VA.

The couple were Great Grandparents to ten little ones: Ben Mielcarek, Ellie Moga, Zoe Crossman, Michael Moga, Cam Crossman, Nicky Moga, Taylor Bryan, Clementine Shaffner, Drif Bryan and Lorelei Shaffner.

Gene is remembered fondly by nieces and nephews who lovingly called him "Uncle Driffy".

Gene was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on March 12, 1928. His mother, Mildred, passed away when he was just 5 years old. He was raised by his father, Raymond, and maternal grandparents, Gertrude and Oscar Berkemeier. When Gene was given his first saxophone at the age of 9, his career as a professional musician began. Gene attended grammar school at Grace Lutheran Church in Cincinnati. It was there at the age of 12 that he found a friend in Helen Rullmann. He proposed to her for the first time when he was just 16 and at that same church three years later, he married Helen on June 21, 1947. Gene pursued his career as a professional musician in the United States Army Band stationed at Ft. Myer, VA. Gene and Helen built a home together and raised a family in Alexandria, VA. After 33 1/2 years, he retired from the Army Band as a Sergeant Major, saxophonist and clarinetist and after 30 years he retired from teaching private music lessons at home. Gene served and nurtured scores of children through church children's choirs. During the 1980s, Gene earned an Associates Degree in photography and embarked on a second career.

After Gene's retirement, the couple enjoyed extensive international travel, but always had a special place in their hearts for our National Parks. Gene and Helen particularly enjoyed the warm southwestern states in the winter months. One particularly memorable experience was his hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back. Gene's "partner for life" was an excellent cook and he was the always appreciative primary beneficiary of her gourmet goodies.

Together Gene and Helen built three homes. The final spot they truly called home in their later years was on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River in Luray, VA.

Gene embraced his Christian faith and was an active member of Muhlenberg Lutheran Church in Harrisonburg, VA and a supporting member of the congregation at Emanuel Lutheran Church in Woodstock, VA with a particular interest in fostering music and community outreach programs. Gene will be laid to rest next to the love of his life, Helen, at Beahm's Chapel Cemetery in Luray on November 6, 2025. Together they selected the site to be in the mountains of Virginia that they loved, in the shadow of Stony Man Mountain. The words etched on their grave marker read: "A Mighty Fortress is our God."

We, the family, imagine that Dad would want to be remembered - not just for his wisdom and compassion - but for his curiosity.

"How many ways can you look at the same thing?"

"If you were going to paint the sky, what colors would you choose?"

Three days before he passed, he asked "How do we help those people in Gaza?"

Two days before he passed, he said "I love you. I love you. I'm excited to go."

The day before he passed, he knew we were there.

He took his last breath after we told him "You can go, Dad. Mom has been wondering what's taking you so long. Give Jeff a hug for us when you get there."

Online condolences may be left at [valleyfs.com](http://valleyfs.com)

Arrangements by Heishman Funeral Home Inc., Heishman Funeral Service Branch, Woodstock.

# Cemetery Details

## **Beahms Chapel Cemetery**

Luray, VA 22835

# Tribute Wall

DB

“ Seeing Uncle Driffy at Lisa’s pumpkin party. He took so many pictures he was out of memory in his camera card. Used my card up completely too. A gentle and happy man.  
*Doug Bockstiegel*

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**Doug Bockstiegel** - November 06, 2025 at 03:10 PM

GP

“ Giant P. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Eugene Leonard Drifmeyer.

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**Giant P.** - November 05, 2025 at 10:34 AM