



David Oatman, age 93, member of a founding Dundee family, died on Mon. Nov. 8, 2021 after living a full and robust life. Dave was a devoted husband, and a loving father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He had a gentle and generous soul, and he was a problem-solver until the end.

John David Oatman was born on June 15, 1928, at his grandmother's home in Pittsfield, Ill. Most of his early childhood was spent in Dundee, where the Oatmans had lived for five generations. After high school in Geneva, he spent a college year at Lake Forest Academy before enrolling at Colorado College, where he majored in biology and made quite the impression: He was an All-Rocky Mountain Conference Tackle on the football team and president of his senior class.

He completed five years in the military as an Air Force pilot, during which time he married bright and confident Janet Adams of Denver whom he had met in college. He and Janet were stationed in Japan for three years, where Dave flew multi-engine B-46 and C-54 carrier aircrafts.

In 1956, Dave and Janet returned to Dundee with toddler Loris in tow and her younger brother Peter on the way. Sisters Ann and Julia soon followed. Dave joined the family business, helping his father William (Bill) Oatman run Milk Specialties, a dairy recycling operation, before developing his own company, Sugar Tree Products. In his free time, he tinkered in his workshop and helped Janet maintain their lush garden at their Sleepy Hollow home.

Music was an integral part of Dave's life. He sang tenor in the First Congregational Church choir for almost 60 years. There was nothing that he enjoyed more than playing the guitar and singing around the campfire with family and friends. He loved being outdoors. He and Janet spent many a summer camping and canoeing in the Northern Boundary Waters or in the winter exploring the beaches of St. John, US Virgin Islands.

When Dave retired in 1990, he wasn't ready to sit still. He founded the Habitat for Humanity of Northern Fox Valley and led it for a decade, patiently assisting volunteers in constructing homes for those in need. He also crafted furniture, porches, stone walls, and tree forts for his family, and he helped build them a majestic cabin, Tsuga Lodge, overlooking Smoky Lake in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, where they still regularly gather.

Dave was constantly thinking of ways to improve and enhance his surroundings. He was a builder at heart. He leaves a lasting legacy of creative projects and love. Dave is survived by his wife, Janet; daughters Loris (Arno) Damerow of Ann Arbor, MI; Ann (Dan) Gardner of Colorado Springs, CO; Rev. Julia (Jim) Hollister of Sheboygan, WI; and daughter-in-law Dottie Oatman of Boulder, CO; grandchildren Carl (Joanie) Damerow, Marin (Tom) Klumpner, Maddie (Nick) Oatman, Rachel Gardner, Avery (Tim) Oatman, Molly Gardner, Jon Hollister, and Jessica Hollister; and four great-grandchildren. Dave was preceded in death by his son, Peter Oatman, and his sister, Rachel Johansen. A memorial service will be held at First Congregational Church, UCC, Dundee, on Saturday, Nov. 20th at 11:30 am, with visitation at the church starting at 9:30

am. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Dave's name to the First Congregational Church Building and Grounds Fund or Habitat for Humanity of Northern Fox Valley. The Miller Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be expressed at <https://www.millerfuneralhomedundee.com/>.

To send flowers to the family or plant a tree in memory of J. David Oatman, please visit our Heartfelt Sympathies Store.