

DENIS MEINERT



Denis loved life with a passion that inspired and enriched the lives of everyone around him. His extraordinary spirit, dedication, and commitment as a husband, father, grandfather, friend, and community leader set a remarkable example for us all. Denis passed away peacefully at his home, in O'Hara Township, Pittsburgh, PA, surrounded by his loving family on August 26, 2024, at the age of 64.

Denis was born on June 10, 1960, in Pittsburgh, PA as the fifth of John and Alice Meinert's ten children. He grew up in a close-knit family in O'Hara Township, where he lived for 60 years within a mile of his parents. Denis attended Saint Joseph Primary and Middle School before graduating from Fox Chapel Area High School. He had an active childhood playing any sport available to him in addition to playing cards and working at John A. Meinert Landscaping for his father. His leadership development began with the mentorship of his father.

He furthered his education at Grove City College, arriving with just two duffel bags: one for clothes and the other packed with sports equipment. While at Grove City College, he made lifelong friends and had an active social life. He joined and became the President of Kappa Alpha Phi fraternity and enjoyed intramural sports. Most importantly, while at Grove City College, he met the love of his life, Fran (Jackson) Meinert. Denis and Fran married in 1982, a few months after graduation. He remained active in the Grove City College community over the years, giving guest lectures and attending the annual fraternity golf outing where he was better known for sporting bright green pants than his golf skills. Denis later earned his MBA from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Denis' professional journey was distinguished by remarkable achievements. He became known for his problem solving. He started his career at H.B. Maynard and Co., where he spent 25 years playing a pivotal role in building and eventually selling the business. Over the years, he earned admiration and respect for his work ethic and principled approach to business, which he used to start Meinert LLC. He was especially skilled at negotiating primarily due to his innate ability to understand people and find a win-win. Denis' skill set and connections provided opportunities for consulting with several different companies including CAPTCHA, reCAPTCHA, 4moms and Duolingo with the two latter companies turning into full time employment. He joined Duolingo when the company was just a small team of 20, and helped it grow to over 500 employees by the time he retired. His arrival raised the average age by about 20 years, earning him the affectionate nickname 'Work Dad' from his fellow duos. He fondly recalled many of his former co-workers, who often felt like an extended family.

His leadership extended beyond the corporate world. He was committed to his faith in Jesus Christ, and it influenced everything he did. Denis belonged to St. Joseph parish since he was a child where he and Fran donated their time to serve as marriage counselors, and he was part of the fundraising committee for the new church. He served terms as the Treasurer and President of O'Hara Township and was a member and President of Lake Latonka Board. Denis also dedicated his time to numerous other community organizations, including Habitat for Humanity, Fox Chapel Winter League, Boy Scouts of America, Black Pastors United for Education, and Commonwealth Foundation.

Denis' zest for life was evident in the range of his hobbies. He took countless bike trips with his wife and friends. His passion for volleyball, which began in high school, continued through adulthood with sand volleyball leagues and Walleyball pick-up games. While he wasn't known for his basketball finesse—often fouling out and missing free throws—his enthusiasm for the sport remained undiminished. Denis enjoyed playing pickleball wherever he could find a game and was best known for his signature move the sky ball. He never missed an opportunity to spend time at his favorite place, Lake Latonka. There, he treasured the stunning sunsets, captained his boat 'A Bit Much,' orchestrated spectacular fireworks show, and never missed a ski season. After countless memorable summers at the lake, he considers the friends he made there to be his second family.

Above all, Denis was a devoted family man. He was a loving and dedicated husband to his wife, Fran, with whom he shared over 41 years of marriage. As a father, he was a role model and inspiration, guiding his children through life with wisdom and compassion. He always made sure to spend quality time with each of them through camping trips, family vacations, and never missed their sporting events. He enjoyed coaching his children's youth basketball, baseball, and soccer teams as well as his grandson's t-ball team. One of Denis' greatest joys in life was being a grandfather and sharing countless moments with his five grandchildren. He especially enjoyed fishing trips with his children and grandchildren. He was an eternal optimist who loved life and lived it to its fullest.

Denis is survived by his wife Fran; his children, Mary Bamberg (Jeffrey), Mark Meinert (Crystal), Max Meinert (Molly), and Marcy Pratt-Panford (Ebo); and his grandchildren, James and Elsie Bamberg, Connor, Zoe and Fitzgerald Meinert, and soon-to-be Ebo Pratt-Panford Jr. He is also survived by his nine siblings and 38 nieces and nephews. Denis was preceded in death by his parents, John and Alice Meinert; his parents-in-law, Jim and Mary Jackson; his sister-in-law, Shelley Jackson; and his nephew, Benjamin Franks-Meinert.

A man of humility, kindness, and unwavering faith, Denis was passionate about life and dedicated to serving others. He was selfless to the very end. His presence will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

A service will be held on Saturday, September 28th, at 10:00 AM at St. Joseph's Church, 342 Dorseyville Road, Pittsburgh PA, 15215, with a celebration of life to follow.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to be made in Denis' memory to Black Pastors United for Education, Commonwealth Foundation or the Bartlett Cancer Research Fund.

Condolences may be shared at:

www.thomasmsmithfh.com

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