



# DANA BERTRAND HAMEL

AUGUST 09, 1923 - JUNE 23, 2023



# ORDER OF EVENTS

## VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL

10:00 AM Scripture Reading & Prayer, Rev. Tim Solomon  
Shrine of Memory

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10:15 AM Playing of TAPS & Folding of the Flag

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10:30 AM Hors d'oeuvres & Sharing of Fond Remembrances  
- 1 PM Veterans Hall



## THANK YOU FROM THE FAMILY

The love, respect, and recognition that you all bestowed upon our father has truly been a precious gift. We hope you know that he loved, respected, and praised each of you even when you weren't around. From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for *all of it*. We hope that when you remember him, you remember how he stamped his letters with smiley faces, complimented everyone and offered them a candy bar, doted on your angel wings, and called you "a good man Charlie Brown."



# OBITUARY

After nearly 100 years loved, Dr. Dana B. Hamel went to be with his Lord and reunited with his princess, Shirley Elmerree Smith Knavel Hamel, on Friday, June 23rd.

Dana Bertrand Hamel, a twin, was born in Rumford, Maine in 1923. After a year, the family moved to East Conemaugh, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Johnstown, the famous Flood City of 1889. The Hamel family had been in the jewelry business, and Dana's father found work in the railroad, steel mill, and coalmining community which laid along the tracks of a Pennsylvania Railroad hub. Accurate timepieces were essential to the running of the railroad. Dana grew up there, helped his father run the family jewelry/watch repair store. It was there he met his future wife Shirley in a local church.

After the beginning of WWII, he enlisted in the Army Air Force. Because of his watch repair background, he was to become an airplane instrument specialist, but instead became a chaplain's assistant and served in that capacity throughout the Pacific Theater. After the war's end, he returned to East Conemaugh, married Shirley and opened his own jewelry/watch repair store, Hamel's Jewelers. After about two years, his twin brother convinced him to attend Ashland College located in Ashland, Ohio. Dana graduated with a bachelor's degree and moved the family to Columbus, Ohio where he earned a Master's Degree and ABD Degree in psychology. After a year of teaching management for General Motors in Dayton, Ohio, the family moved to a suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio where Dana assumed the position of Dean of Students at Ohio Mechanics Institute. This later became the Ohio College of Applied Science in 1958 and one of the first technical schools in the United States founded in 1828. He earned a Doctorate Degree in Education at the University of Cincinnati.

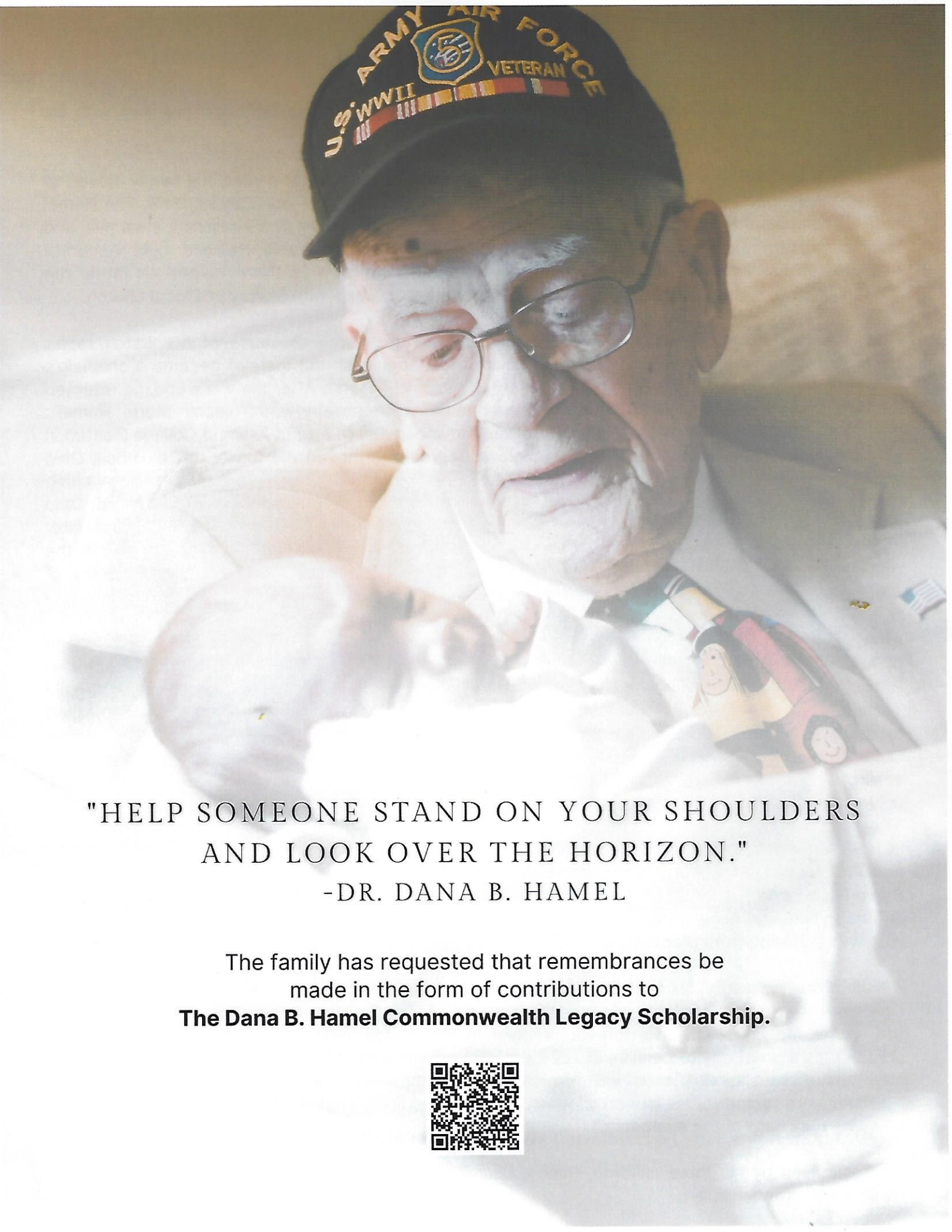
After seven years and during a leadership transition, he became the Acting President of Ohio College of Applied Science. In 1963, he was invited to come to Roanoke, Virginia and be the Director of Roanoke Technical Institute, a division of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, now referred to as Virginia Tech. In 1964, he was invited to a meeting with the Governor of Virginia, Albertis Harrison, and asked to start a system of technical schools throughout Virginia which quickly became the Virginia Community College System, consisting of twenty-three separate college campuses. He spent a year at Virginia State University coordinating transfer programs from the community college system to the university.

In 1984, Governor Rob asked him to create and become the Director of the Virginia Center For Public and Private Initiatives. The center was instrumental with the creation of the Continuous Electron Beam Accelerator Facility (CEBAF) to study nuclear matter. The center is now known as the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility or Jefferson Lab. In 1996, Dana retired to take care of Shirley who was suffering from Diabetes. Shirley passed away in 2006 after sixty-one years of marriage.

A man of quiet integrity, he was proud to see those who succeeded him take the Virginia Community College system to new heights. He was the epitome of The Greatest Generation, and his hopes for the future and his legacy will forever resound in the professional community with his signature phrase, "It's a great day to be alive in The Commonwealth." What's more, countless neighbors, family members, nurses, and friends will remember his compliments and witty metaphors including, "Problems are opportunities in work clothes," "Your wings are bumping into everything," and "I'm the guy who took care of the elephants."

He is survived by his three children, Randy, Michelle, and April, as well as five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.





"HELP SOMEONE STAND ON YOUR SHOULDERS  
AND LOOK OVER THE HORIZON."

-DR. DANA B. HAMEL

The family has requested that remembrances be  
made in the form of contributions to  
**The Dana B. Hamel Commonwealth Legacy Scholarship.**

