



## Donald H. Kettner

July 16, 1931 - July 1, 2018

Donald H. Kettner, age 86, of Glendive, Montana passed away on Sunday, July 1, 2018 at the Billings Clinic in Billings, Montana. Visitation will be held from 1:00 P.M. until 5:00 P.M. and from 6:00 P.M. until 8:00 P.M. on Friday, July 13, 2018 at the Silha Funeral Home in Glendive. A Vigil Service will be at 7:00 P.M. on Friday, July 13, 2018 at the Silha Funeral Home. Mass of Christian Burial will be at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, July 14, 2018 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Rite of Committal will be held at St. John's Catholic Cemetery in Beach, North Dakota. Silha Funeral Home of Glendive has been entrusted with the arrangements.

Donald Herman Kettner led a purposeful life. His journey began on July 16, 1931 as a son of Beach (North Dakota) to Herman and Sylvia Kettner. Growing up during the Depression years taught him the values of working hard, setting goals and being financially independent, lessons that he carried with him throughout his life.

He began his lengthy educational career at Carroll College where he played football as he pursued his studies in pre-med. However, after less than two years at Carroll, Don enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. He spent three years in the Corps, including one year serving as a Forward Observer in the Korean War. Staff Sergeant Donald Kettner was discharged in 1954 after receiving the Korean Service Medal, the U.N. Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal and the Good Conduct Medal. Though his tenure as an active Marine was over, his life as a Marine was not. He utilized the military

codes of discipline, loyalty and sacrifice throughout his life. His Marine bulldog tattoo (which matched his personality) became a beacon to fellow service members who never failed to treat him with extra respect and kindness. He also served on the Montana Veterans Affairs Board from 2002-2012, three years as chairman.

Don returned to school and earned his Bachelor of Science degree in English and Physical Education from Dickinson State College. He later earned his Master's degree in Educational Administration from the University of Montana and completed his higher education doctoral research at Montana State University. He began his career in education in Outlook, Montana where he was the principal, athletic director and coach. In 1959 Don became the assistant superintendent and athletic director at St. Mary's High School in New England, North Dakota. In 1962 he accepted a job at Dawson Community College (DCC) in Glendive where he stayed for 37 years. He began as a psychology and English instructor, coach and athletic director and methodically rose to assistant dean, registrar, then vice-president and finally president. He guided DCC (his fifth child) through some of its most successful years and there is no one that could convince Don that his little community college was no less important than any large university. He lobbied ferociously for funding, new programs, accreditation and student acquisitions. He was instrumental in adding dormitories and the Ullman Center to DCC's growing campus. Don retired in 1999 due to health concerns, and proudly took on his title of President Emeritus. Shortly after his retirement, Kettner Dormitory was dedicated to him.

On a personal note, Don married twice, the first time to Vyonne Oech in 1956, and the second time to Elaine Marty in 1970. His first marriage blessed him with four children: Audrey, Lesley, Mike and Pat, and his second gave him two step-children: Tulli and Alan. Don worked hard to provide for his growing family, enforcing the importance of education, family, reputation, faith, and financial responsibility in each of them. Later, Judy Thompson became his sweetheart and in 1999 his forever fiancée. Don truly enjoyed the

companionship and friendship he shared with Judy, either on cruises to faraway destinations, tossing (and occasionally taking) some coins at Madhatters Casino or just relaxing on her patio. After nearly 20 years of engagement, when questioned why he and Judy had not yet tied the knot, Don would reply that they didn't want to rush into anything. She lovingly referred to him as her Little Stubborn German Marine. Judy and her three daughters Cheryl, Kelley and Jodi were indeed beloved family members. Throughout Don's life he set goals, he worked hard, he sacrificed, and he expected the same from those around him. He raised six children, influenced countless number of students, athletes, educators and congressman. He believed in the power of prayer, in giving back to one's community, in standing for the American flag, never backing down from a challenge and the calming effect of a nip of brandy now and then. Don had a quick wit, a crooked smile and the heart of a buccaneer.

Don is survived by his four children: Audrey Nowlin of Glendive, Lesley (Rod) Gibbs of Fallon, Mike (Stacie) Kettner of Meridian, Idaho and Pat (Sherri) Kettner of Glendive; six grandchildren: Kelsey (Chris) Gibbs Crawford of Fallon, Beau Gibbs of Glendive, Ryan (Lora) Kettner of Kettle Falls, Washington, Callie (Matt) Kettner Miller of Kuna, Idaho, and Dalton and Savannah Kettner of Glendive; four great-grandchildren: R'delle Crawford, Coraline Kettner, and Kaden and Kash Miller; one sister: Shirley (Jerry) Fischer of Bismarck, North Dakota and his fiancée Judy Thompson of Glendive. Don was preceded in death by his parents Herman and Sylvia Kettner; step-father, James Eldridge and his brother Robert Kettner.

Donations or memorials may be made to the DCC Kettner Family Scholarship, our local VFW or to the blood drive of your choice.

Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at: [www.silhafuneralhomes.com](http://www.silhafuneralhomes.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 13. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (MT)

Silha Funeral Homes - Glendive, Montana  
221 N. Meade Avenue  
P.O. Box 848  
Glendive, MT 59330  
(406) 377-2622  
silha@midrivers.com  
<https://www.silhafuneralhomes.com>

## Visitation

JUL 13. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (MT)

Silha Funeral Homes - Glendive, Montana  
221 N. Meade Avenue  
P.O. Box 848  
Glendive, MT 59330  
(406) 377-2622  
silha@midrivers.com  
<https://www.silhafuneralhomes.com>

## Vigil Service

JUL 13. 7:00 PM (MT)

Silha Funeral Homes - Glendive, Montana  
221 N. Meade Avenue  
P.O. Box 848  
Glendive, MT 59330  
(406) 377-2622  
silha@midrivers.com  
<https://www.silhafuneralhomes.com>

## Mass of Christian Burial

---

JUL 14. 10:00 AM (MT)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
316 West Benham Street  
Glendive, MT 59330

# Tribute Wall



“ *Donald H. Kettner*

December 07, 2022 at 04:10 PM



“ *Don's greatness for DCC was well matched with the personal 1:1 Encourager and Inspirer he was for everyone who spent even 5 minutes with him. His enthusiasm and joy to be with you on campus or in church were extraordinary. He and his will be loved by so many for so long, his legacy continues in and through us.*

**Pete Bruno** - December 02, 2018 at 01:14 AM



“ *I can't begin to express how grateful I am for all Don did for DCC, his mentorship, and most importantly his friendship. Nothing but love, respect and a heart-filled thank you my friend!*

**Lane Holte** - July 14, 2018 at 10:06 PM

DK

“ Don was everything attributed to him and more. I knew him from the time we were kids and he was definitely above and beyond the ordinary. He had a reputation on and off the basketball court in high school -a high achiever. Don and the Marine Corp were a good fit. He volunteered as a forward observer in Korea, which is considered the most dangerous job in the military. Everything he engaged in was all-in, full speed ahead. His memory lives on as an inspiration to everyone who knew him. My condolences to his family. I will miss him; I will not forget him.

---

**Dick Kukowski** - July 11, 2018 at 03:54 PM

MH

“ I'm sorry to hear of Don's passing. He was an absolute force of nature. He literally put DCC on his back and carried it for nearly four decades. He raised a wonderful family and leaves a legacy in Glendive few will ever match. Glendive should count its blessings Don chose to make it his home. RIP Mr. Kettner...well done.

---

**Michael Hughes** - July 10, 2018 at 08:48 PM

CP

“ Lesley & family. So sorry to read about your dad. Know you all are in our thoughts & prayers. Cherish all the fond memories.

---

**Cherise Patterson** - July 08, 2018 at 10:42 PM

CS

“ Don Kettner was an extraordinary man! Jim and I were neighbors for many years and always enjoyed his hearty smile and laugh. He certainly put his stamp on DCC and the community with his ideas and vitality. He was a rare individual with indefatigable push to make our community and world a little better....AND HE DID! RIP DON KETTNER...

Sympathy is extended to the entire Kettner family and to Judy Thompson and family!

---

**Carol Swanson** - July 08, 2018 at 03:28 AM

KM

I really enjoyed Don, and he was a real Asset and backer of the community! God Bless all of you!

---

**kevin mcgovern** - July 08, 2018 at 03:12 PM

AA

“ Kettner family: Thank you for the special obituary you wrote for your Dad. Anyone who reads it will know him so much better. He worked hard for DCC and Glendive is the better for that energy. He never let us forget what a good thing we had for furthering education in our community. You will miss him, but what a marvelous legacy he leaves in the college, his family and his many friends. He lived well in this time and in this place. God's peace, prayers. Avis Anderson

---

**Avis Anderson** - July 07, 2018 at 04:53 PM

MD

“ Mr. Kettner influenced my life in many ways. Having him as an instructor at DCC set my path in life to work in the Psychology field some way. He was a great teacher and a really nice man. Melissa Delamater



---

**Melissa Delamater** - July 06, 2018 at 03:35 PM

WD

“ *Kind. Compassionate. Caring. If Glendive had a sidewalk star of fame he would be on it. I was blessed to have him as president of DCC. My condolences on the loss of a great man. God's blessings of peace & comfort to you all.*



---

**Wendy D** - July 06, 2018 at 03:29 PM

CD

“ *Carole J. Diede lit a candle in memory of Donald H. Kettner*



---

**Carole J. Diede** - July 06, 2018 at 09:45 AM

 Sharon Snell

“ *May the fullness of God surround all of you with comfort and peace during this difficult time. Let Him hold you close. Don was a strong presence and will be missed. I know family was important to him, and he loved all of you very much so cherish those good memories.*

*Hugs to all . . Love, Sharon*

---

**Sharon Snell** - July 05, 2018 at 02:15 PM

LG

“ *To the Kettner family....I am so sorry for your loss. Laura Grzanic Belfield, ND*

---

**Laura Grzanic** - July 05, 2018 at 12:30 PM

RK

“ Sending prayers and deep sympathy to the entire Kettner family. I am so sorry to hear about your loss. I hope you find comfort and peace among your family and friends during this difficult time. I will be thinking of you.

---

**Rene (Grundhauser) Knapp** - July 05, 2018 at 08:12 AM

BL

“ Bev & Don Lewis lit a candle in memory of Donald H. Kettner



---

**Bev & Don Lewis** - July 04, 2018 at 07:11 PM

DS

“ Denise Stoddart lit a candle in memory of Donald H. Kettner



---

**Denise Stoddart** - July 03, 2018 at 10:01 PM

RS

“ My deepest sympathy to the Kettner Family, I am so saddened to hear of Don's passing.  
I have many fond memories of Don & the Kettner Family. As a neighbor growing up I remember Don well and always looked up to him as an older brother . I remember when he departed to fight in the Korean War and so happy to see hem return safely! Yes, Don will surely be missed but memories will remain. God Bless Don and God Bless You All!!  
Sincerely, Rod Snow

---

**Rod Snow** - July 03, 2018 at 06:12 PM

MQ

*I always enjoyed spending time at the Kettner House. It was always so busy. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Take care, Marlene Diefel Quick*

---

**Marlene Quick** - July 05, 2018 at 08:41 AM

TH

“ My condolences to all of the Kettner family on the loss of your father, husband, and grandfather. You're in my thoughts and prayers. You're a special family to me.

---

**Tracey Hughes** - July 03, 2018 at 10:22 AM

JT

“ Shirley, sorry to hear about Don's passing. I will always remember him coming to see my Aunt Margie when she was home from college lots of years ago. He always was so friendly to me. My prayers are with you and his family.

*Judy Niece Tibor*

---

**Judy Tibor** - July 03, 2018 at 09:44 AM

SD

“ *Deepest sympathy Shirley in the loss of your brother and to his family Pat, Mike, Audrey and Leslie. Lots of memories. Love Sharon Farstveet Dietz*



---

**Sharon Dietz** - July 02, 2018 at 10:24 PM

BT

“ *Kettner Family I'm so sorry for your Loss! It's always sad when we lose our parents and even when we think we are prepared we never are! Cherish your Memories and hold them close they will help get you through the difficult days ahead.*

---

**Becky (Chouinard) Tipton** - July 02, 2018 at 05:05 PM