



## John Mitchell Kirsch

September 17, 1926 - April 22, 2021

John Mitchell Kirsch (“Jack”) passed away on April 22, 2021 in the Manassas, Virginia residence that he called home for the past 53 years.

Mr. Kirsch was born September 17, 1926 in Erie, PA, the eldest son of the late Joseph Edward and Emma Romaine Kirsch. Following his tour of duty in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II, Mr. Kirsch married Charlotte Louise Kunz (“Liz”) on August 9, 1948. On September 25, 1950, Mr. Kirsch began what would become an illustrious 27 year career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). As a Special Agent in the field, Mr. Kirsch handled and/or supervised numerous major incidents, including bank robberies, extortions, kidnappings, and fugitive investigations. During his tenure with the FBI, Mr. Kirsch was stationed in Los Angeles, CA; San Francisco, CA; Washington, DC; Chicago, IL; Pittsburgh, PA; and Quantico, VA.

In 1966, Mr. Kirsch was assigned as the supervisory instructor in the Planning and Research Unit of the FBI Training Division, which was tasked with designing both the architecture and curriculum of the new FBI National Academy in Quantico, VA. The group was also responsible for conducting a nationwide search for an expanded faculty of FBI agents to teach there. As an expert firearms and defensive tactics instructor, Mr. Kirsch researched and taught these disciplines to all levels of law enforcement personnel, not only at the Academy, but throughout the United States.

In 1972, Mr. Kirsch was chosen as the first Chairman of the newly formed Behavioral Science Unit, which undertook the use of criminal profiling with regards to violent crimes. The television show "Criminal Minds" is based on this FBI profiling unit. In 1976, Mr. Kirsch was made a Section Chief in the Training Division, responsible for many of the training programs conducted by the FBI, to include the training of all new agents. He also established the Terrorist Research and Management Staff within his own section in the Training Division which studied terrorism and developed counter-terrorist strategies. Many of these concepts, including hostage negotiation techniques, are now standard procedure worldwide. Mr. Kirsch is also known as the father of the FBI's quick reaction assault teams, which he developed to counteract terrorist takeovers of facilities and aircraft. He was acknowledged around the world as one of the primary experts in counter-terrorism in the United States.

Mr. Kirsch retired on July 2, 1977 to spend time with his family. He was an avid reader, loved hunting, fishing, spending time with his friends at the Fairfax Rod and Gun Club, and always enjoyed a good cigar. Mr. Kirsch is survived by his wife of almost 73 years, Liz; daughter Gretchen L. Kirsch of Haymarket, VA; son John M. Kirsch, Jr. (Jane) of Fairfax, VA; son Daniel J. Kirsch (Melinda) and twin grandsons Jackson R. Kirsch and Ethan D. Kirsch of Bristow, VA; sisters Eileen Kirsch McLaughlin and Elaine Kirsch Mozdy (Frank) all of Erie, PA; and many nieces and nephews. Mr. Kirsch was preceded in death by his brother, James E. Kirsch, and his sister-in-law, Helen H. Kirsch, both of Albuquerque, NM; brother-in law, James E. McLaughlin, of Erie, PA; niece, Carrie R. Kurzeka, of Albuquerque, NM; niece, Cynthia R. McLaughlin, of Erie, PA; and niece, Michele K. Suprunowicz, of Saratoga Springs, NY.

A private funeral Mass will be held at All Saints Catholic Church on May 7, 2021 at 1:00 pm, and will be streamed live at <https://youtu.be/DsP1QP0mjmC>,

beginning at 1:00 pm.

Burial at Quantico National Cemetery on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 11:00 AM.

Expressions of sympathy may be made in the form of donations to the Former Agents of the FBI Foundation for the George A. Zeiss Memorial Scholarship Fund. Donations may be made at [www.socxfbi.org](http://www.socxfbi.org) or sent directly to the Foundation at 3717 Fetter Park Drive, Dumfries, VA 22025.

# Previous Events

## Graveside Services

JUN **15**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Quantico National Cemetery  
18424 Joplin Rd  
Triangle, VA 22172-1636  
(703) 221-2183

# Tribute Wall

VH

“ Dear Gretchen and family,

*I was so sorry to hear of your dad's passing. He was a special, though humble, accomplished man not only in his service to this country, but as a father, father figure, and friend to many.*

*One of my first memories of your dad was probably during the summer of 1968, shortly after you moved onto Montgomery Drive when I joined your family for a pool day. He was leading the car in song, Frank Sinatra's High Hopes. I can still hear "Oops there goes another rubber tree plant!"*

*Of course there are many other memories including some valuable life lessons when we hung out with your parents in the family room. Even in adulthood, he welcomed my husband and me over for a lesson on investing in the stock market. The knowledge he imparted has been helpful to this day.*

*I hope all of your special memories help you through this sad, difficult time. You were wonderful to your parents to the very end and they are smiling down upon you!*

*With love,*

*Vicki Huber*

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**Vicki Huber** - May 19, 2021 at 02:32 AM

GC

“ My parents have been close friends of Jack and Liz since we move to Manassas in 1969, and I grew up with Gretchen and Mitch. I was terribly saddened to learn of Jack’s recent passing. He was a fine man, great father and husband, and true patriot to his country. Because I now live far away, I’ve not had the privilege of seeing Jack for many years. But whenever I think of him, I clearly remember the powerful presence, the booming voice, and the wonderful sense of humor. He is one of my favorite memories of Manassas! I read, with great interest, the excellent eulogy that Gretchen prepared. From it, I learned much more about the modest man I knew. He was indeed a respected leader in his chosen profession! I only wish I could have talked to him about it, and heard some of his great stories. My sincere sympathies to the family on this great loss. Please take solace in knowing that Jack will be fondly remembered by all who knew him.

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**Greg Cockerill** - May 13, 2021 at 10:19 PM

BC

“ To Gretchen and the Kirsch family,  
So very sorry to hear of the loss of your father.  
Having many fond memories to fill your heart  
will help it to heal! Please accept our deepest  
condolences in your time of sorrow!  
Love,  
Bev & Rob



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**Bev & Rob Calderoni** - May 08, 2021 at 08:37 AM

CD

“ My condolences to Gretchen and the Kirsch family. Jack Kirsch leaves remarkable legacy with the FBI, his family and community. May he rest in Peace. --Charlie Deane

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**Charlie T Deane** - May 08, 2021 at 07:08 AM

DW

“ Your father was very kind to me when I was troubled. I am so sorry for your loss.

*Doug Waldron*

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**Doug Waldron** - May 07, 2021 at 03:47 PM

JS

“ Liz, Gretchen, Dan and Mitch. I am so sorry for the loss of Jack. My heart hurts for you. Our families were so tied to each other through our dads. I'm sure he's up there swapping stories with his best friend Crick. The Crickenberger family sends their deepest sympathies.

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**Jane Crickenberger Simpson** - May 06, 2021 at 08:20 PM

DK

“ Dear Gretchen, we go back nearly 50 years and although i didnt see your Dad often, i know he was a wonderful man because he raised a wonderful daughter. My thoughts are with you, my friend, and your family during this difficult time. Keep your memories close and talk of him often. Sending love to you, Dawn Kelpy

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**Dawn Kelpy** - May 06, 2021 at 06:39 PM

CB

“ Liz, Gretchen, John, Danny and all the Kirsch family. My deepest condolences.

*Gretchen, how far back we go, to our first meeting at the Broken Wheel when you boarded Goose (running the barn door off the rails) until your barn was built, countless sleepovers, at each other's houses. Going to both grandparents with me (the additional granddaughter), and yet our parents and my grandparents survived our antics! Your Dad was a wonderful man, always a hug and a smile) I know how much he will be missed. Keeping you in my thoughts as you grieve his loss. Cece*

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**Cecelia Harvey Becker** - May 06, 2021 at 10:12 AM

KO

“ Dear Gretchen & family...My heart goes out to all of you in the loss of your precious husband, father, brother, uncle or grandfather. Having worked with Gretchen at Pr. William County PD, I know how much she loved her Dad and she was so proud of him. She seemed to glow just talking about him or sharing a special moment with him. May he Rest in Peace and know I am thinking of each and every one of you. Hugs and much love - remember all the good times with this precious man. Love and my condolences, Karen L. Osler



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**Karen L Osler** - May 06, 2021 at 07:52 AM

EC

“ My prayers and sympathy for the Kirsch family in this time of sadness.

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**ERNEST CORNETT** - May 05, 2021 at 09:12 PM

WC

“ Liz, Gretch, Mitch, Dan,  
The internet isn't big enough for all we want to say You know how  
we feel. Bless you all.  
Hal and Joan.

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**Walter Cockerill** - May 05, 2021 at 03:35 PM

CM

“ Liz, Gretchen, John, Danny and the Kirsch family; I have such fond  
memories of you all in Hillcrest. Jack and my Daddy were such  
good friends. Solid men that loved their families and country.  
Gretchen, I still remember the building of the barn for Goose! My  
sincere condolences to the family and sending prayers that God  
comforts each of you while you grieve. With sincere sympathy,  
Cyndi Merritt

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**Cyndi Merritt** - May 05, 2021 at 02:41 PM

CB

Liz, Gretchen, John, Danny and all the Kirsch family. My deepest  
condolences. Gretchen, how far back we go, to our first meeting at the  
Broken Wheel when you boarded Goose until your barn was built,  
countless sleepovers, at each other's houses. Going to both  
grandparents with me, and yet our parents survived our antics! Your  
Dad was a wonderful man and I know how much he will be missed.  
Keeping you in my thoughts as you grieve his loss. Cece

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**Cecelia Harvey Becker** - May 05, 2021 at 08:47 PM

GR

Gretchen, you and your family are in our thoughts and prayers. Your  
father had a good long life and we thank him for all he did for this  
country. We hope that you find some comfort knowing that your father  
is not suffering anymore.  
The Grinnells

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**Grinnell** - May 06, 2021 at 10:31 AM

TC

*Gretchen & family - As a fellow club member, I always looked forward to seeing his Ford ranger truck parked outside the canteen on Tuesday mornings. I truly enjoyed his wonderful stories about everything from "the time I had to do a nickel in Chicago" to "the Old Man wouldn't be caught dead in a blue dress with red shoes". His warm smile and easy going laugh made you feel as if you had known him for years, even if only for a few months. With his passing, we are truly diminished.*

*-Tommy Carroll*

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TC - June 18, 2021 at 10:41 PM

MG

“*Gretchen and Family: Our deepest sympathy to you and your family on your loss. You are in our thoughts and prayers.*”

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**Maury and Vera Gerson** - May 05, 2021 at 10:41 AM