

Christopher Paul Kosnik obituary



Christopher Paul Kosnik (Chris), age 64, of Quechee, VT, passed away peacefully on September 23, 2026, at the Jack Byrne Center for Palliative & Hospice Care at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. He died surrounded by his loving family after a long and hard-fought battle with early-onset Alzheimer's disease.

Chris was born on June 12, 1962, in Bethesda, MD, to Joseph Thomas Kosnik and Joan Sullivan Kosnik. He grew up in Fairfax and Harrisonburg, VA, graduating from Harrisonburg High School in 1980. He went on to earn a BS in biology from the College of William & Mary in 1984 and an MPS in international agriculture and rural development from Cornell University in 1992.

He is survived by a large and loving family, including his wife of 34 years, Lindsay Hance Kosnik; three sons and their partners: Connor Winfield Kosnik and his fiancée, Rachel Tatge (Brooklyn, NY); Ian Sullivan Kosnik and his wife, Emily Philpot Kosnik (Lowell, MA); and Lucas Hance Kosnik and his partner, Katie Stein (Atlanta, GA); and his brothers, brothers-in-law, sisters, and sisters-in-law: Tom Kosnik (Palo Alto, CA); Jean and Jim Colyer (Tampa, FL); Beth and Mark Kosnik (Norfolk, VA); Julie Kosnik (Dallas, TX); and Allen and Heather Hance (Providence, RI). He was also beloved by many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins—too many to list. Finally, he is greatly missed by his devoted Labradors, Silver Belle and Ole Bae.

Chris served with the United States Peace Corps from 1985 to 1989 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as an aquaculture extension agent and volunteer leader. He met Lindsay at Cornell, and they were married in Hanover, NH, in 1992. For the next seven years, they lived in Africa, where Chris continued his work with the Peace Corps as an associate program director and training officer in Cameroon (1993–1996), and as country director in the Republic of the Congo (1996–1997) and Malawi (1997–1999).

From 1999 to 2025, Silver Spring, MD, was home. Chris continued his work with the Peace Corps as Chief of the Field Assistance Division in the Center for Field Assistance & Applied Research. He then worked at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for more than 20 years in various positions. Chris began his journey at USAID as a Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Specialist. He went on to become the Director of Land Tenure and Resource Management, and finally, ended his career as the Director of USAID's Water Office. In 2016, at age 54, Chris was forced to retire early due to his illness. Lindsay retired in 2023 to become Chris's full-time caregiver, and they moved to Quechee, VT, to enjoy their time together in the beauty of northern New England.

After learning of Chris's passing, one colleague wrote:

“He was very special. As a team leader, he acted very differently ... Most leaders tried to add numbers to their team. Chris recognized that he had team members with special talents that could be more effective if they had their own teams and more resources. He advocated for them and spun off two teams that produced innovative and noteworthy achievements.

“Some team leaders take choice assignments for themselves and assign mundane bureaucratic tasks to staff members. Chris did the opposite. He took on the mundane, clearing the way for his staff to carry out the more invigorating and stimulating assignments that also brought recognition. He was widely respected and admired.”

Outside of an inspiring and successful career of service, Chris loved his family above all else. Time with his wife and three sons was his priority: geocaching, camping, exploring woodland ponds and ocean tide pools, adventurous cooking and enjoying meals and conversation around the family dining room table, playing games, watching movies (especially a good horror film!), gardening, birding, traveling, cheering for the Washington Commanders, and watching his boys play lacrosse.

After family came friends, many of whom participated in Kosnik outings, often inspired and organized by Chris.

Chris was an avid reader and was always seeking out knowledge through books, media, and podcasts (way before they were cool!), but especially through conversations with friends, family, and strangers from every walk of life. He was patient, thoughtful, generous, empathetic, a lifelong learner, and volunteer. He was witty and silly and made people laugh. He was intelligent and a knower of very fun and extremely random facts. He was independent, passionate, a mentor, a teacher, and an advocate for people in need.

A celebration of life will be held in early 2027 in Silver Spring, MD. Details will follow.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial donations be made to the Christopher Paul Kosnik Program Fund, an endowed fund supporting life-enriching programming for people living with dementia at the Upper Valley Adult Day Care in Woodstock, VT.
www.uppervalleyaduldaycare.com/donate

This center, and far too few centers like it, provides a loving and safe place for people living with dementia and relief for caregivers, allowing them to keep their loved ones at home for as long as possible.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to the teams at Upper Valley Adult Day Care in Woodstock, VT; Ray of Hope Geriatric Mental Health at Cottage Hospital in Woodsville, NH; and the Jack Byrne Center for Palliative & Hospice Care at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH. Your professionalism, expertise, compassion, support, and love for Chris, his family, and all those you serve are profoundly important and deeply appreciated.

Chris enjoyed a life of love, family, friendship, and giving back to those less fortunate than he. In his honor, we share this excerpt from one of his favorite poems, so that it may inspire those after him to do the same:

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I— I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

—Robert Frost