

Founded in 1839, Virginia Military Institute is the nation's first state-supported military college. VMI is part of the state-supported system of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The governor appoints the Board of Visitors, the Institute's governing body. The superintendent is the chief executive officer.

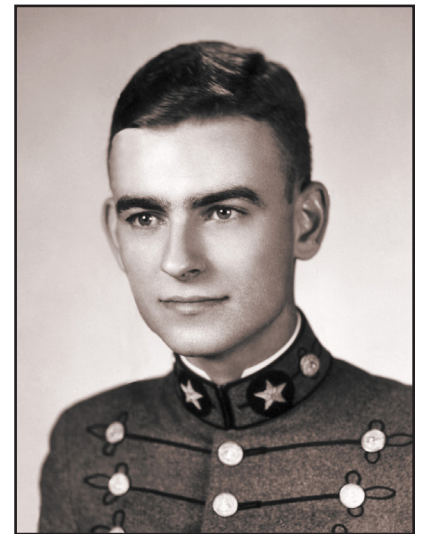
U.S. News & World Report has ranked VMI among the nation's top undergraduate public liberal arts colleges since 2001. *Georgetown University Study* ranks VMI Number 1 for Return on Investment among liberal arts colleges nationwide.

JONATHAN M. DANIELS, VMI CLASS OF 1961

Jonathan Daniels, valedictorian of the VMI Class of 1961, was a seminarian at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., in 1965 when he answered the call of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for clergy to assist with civil rights and voter registration efforts in the South. On Aug. 20, 1965, he made the ultimate sacrifice: giving his life for that of another.

Daniels, Richard Morrisroe, a Catholic priest from Chicago, and black teenagers Ruby Sales and Joyce Bailey approached Varner's Cash Store in Hayneville, Ala., to buy sodas. Tom Coleman, a part-time deputy sheriff, appeared in the doorway of the store holding a shotgun. As Coleman lowered his gun at Sales, Daniels pushed her to the ground just before the first blast killed him, almost instantly. Father Morrisroe then shoved Bailey behind a parked car before the second blast hit him. He was critically injured and spent six months in the hospital recovering.

When he heard of the tragedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., said, "One of the most heroic Christian deeds of which I have heard in my entire ministry was performed by Jonathan Daniels. Certainly there are no incidents more beautiful in the annals of church history, and though we are grieved at this time, our grief should give way to a sense of Christian honor and nobility."



Over the years, Jonathan Daniels' selfless act often has been recognized. Two books have been written about him, and in the summer of 1994 the Episcopal Church added the date of his death to its Calendar of Lesser Feasts and Fasts, an honor bordering on sainthood or martyrdom. Daniels' name is inscribed in Canterbury Cathedral's Chapel of Saints and Martyrs of our Times as one of 15 modern day martyrs honored by the Anglican Church.

In 1995, VMI held a two-day Jonathan Daniels symposium on Post, attended by Father Morrisroe, Sales, and Dr. Charles Eagles, author of "Outside Agitator, Jon Daniels and the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama." Two years later Cabell Brand '44 sponsored the dedication of a memorial plaque to Jonathan Daniels, which was unveiled in a ceremony in the town-square of Hayneville.

In February 1999, "Here Am I Send Me: The Journey of

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Jonathan Daniels” was narrated by Sam Waterston and aired nationally on the Odyssey Channel. The film is viewed by each entering class of the Institute.

In March 2004, the Reston Chorale presented the world premier of composer Julius P. Williams’ musical composition, “A Journey to Freedom, Honor and Glory, A Tribute to Jonathan Myrick Daniels” to a packed auditorium in Alexandria, Va.

The VMI Board of Visitors established the Jonathan M. Daniels ‘61 Humanitarian Award in December 1997 to emphasize the virtue of humanitarian public service and to recognize individuals who have made significant personal sacrifices to protect or improve the lives of others. The scope of nominees is on a national level.

The External Development Committee of the VMI Board of Visitors and a separate task force established criteria and guidelines for the award. These committees worked closely with VMI’s Promaji Club, an organization of VMI cadets that promotes positive relations among all races and ethnic groups in the Corps of Cadets. The Promaji Club initiated a Jonathan Daniels Award in 1992, and its leadership graciously agreed to give the Institute exclusive use of the name for the new Jonathan Daniels Humanitarian Award.

Though a recipient of the Jonathan Daniels Award may not necessarily be selected each year, an annual ceremony is held each March on or near Jonathan Daniels’ birthday (March 20). Its purpose is to afford cadets a continuing reminder that it is possible to embody and display heroic qualities of honor, loyalty and devotion at any age and in any circumstances. The External Relations Committee oversees this annual ceremony and the bestowing of the award upon selection.

In February 1998, a ceremony establishing the Daniels Humanitarian Award was held at VMI; and during the annual memorial event in March 2000 it was announced that President Carter would be the first recipient. On hand to speak at both events was The Very Reverend John A. Simpson, Dean of England’s Canterbury Cathedral. In March 2004, the Institute dedicated the Jonathan Daniels Courtyard and archway at VMI. Ambassador Andrew Young was presented the second Daniels Humanitarian Award in March 2006. Dr. Paul V. Hebert, VMI Class of 1968, was presented the third Daniels Humanitarian Award in 2011. The Honorable John Lewis, U.S. Representative – Georgia 5th District, received the award in 2015. Carolyn S. Miles, President and Chief Executive Officer of Save the Children was presented the award in 2019.

The Virginia Military Institute is committed to providing an environment that emphasizes the dignity and worth of every member of its community and that is free from harassment and discrimination based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, genetic information, against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities, or based on any other status protected by law. In pursuit of this goal, any question of impermissible discrimination on these bases will be addressed with efficiency and energy and in accordance with VMI General Order 16. General Order 16 also addresses complaints or reports of retaliation against those who have opposed prohibited practices, those who have filed complaints or reports of prohibited practices, and those who have testified or otherwise participated in enforcement of General Order 16. Questions regarding discrimination prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, or other federal law, may be referred to the VMI Inspector General and Title IX Coordinator, 212 Carroll Hall, VMI, Lexington, VA 24450, (540) 464-7072. Any cadet or prospective cadet having questions about disability services for students should contact the Director of the Center for Cadet Counseling and Disability Services, 448 Institute Hill, 2nd floor, Post Infirmary, Lexington, Va. 24450, (540) 464-7667. For employment-related disability services, contact the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator in the VMI Human Resources Office, Lexington, VA 24450, (540) 464-7322.