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Maj. Gen. John L. Fugh, 75, dies; served as Army's judge advocate general

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Maj. Gen. John L. Fugh, who served as the Army's top uniformed lawyer in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War and later had a successful career in the private sector as China liaison to major corporations, died May 11 at National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda after a heart attack. He was 75.



Gen. Fugh (pronounced "foo"), the first Chinese American general officer in the U.S. Army, was a Beijing native who left China with his family after the Communist takeover in 1949. He spent his 33-year military career in the Judge Advocate General's Corps, including a tour of duty in Vietnam as a judge advocate at the height of the war.

He rose through the JAG Corps hierarchy, serving in the late 1970s in Frankfurt, Germany, as staff judge advocate for the 3rd Armored Division. Afterward, in Washington, he was chief of the JAG Corps' litigation division, handling all non-criminal cases, including lawsuits over promotion, policy and contracts.

In 1984, after being promoted to brigadier general, he was named assistant judge advocate general for civil law. During this period, he helped start the first environmental law practice in the Army. He was judge advocate general of the Army from July 1991 until his retirement in June 1993.

Fred L. Borch III, regimental historian and archivist for the Army JAG Corps, called Gen. Fugh "one of best civil litigators in the Army in pursuing cases of contract and procurement fraud." Borch also described him as a capable supervisor after the Persian Gulf War, when he wrestled with complex legal issues including reconstruction of Kuwait and the repatriation of Iraqi prisoners of war.

After his military retirement, Gen. Fugh worked for the St. Louis-based aerospace manufacturer and defense contractor McDonnell Douglas, overseeing the company's marketing and manufacturing operations in China. He later worked in China for Boeing, after that aerospace company acquired McDonnell Douglas, and then for Enron International.

John Liu Fugh was born Fu Liu-ren on Sept. 12, 1934. His father, Philip, was private secretary to John Leighton Stuart, who led a university in Beijing and was the last U.S. ambassador to China before the Communists seized power.

The Fughs settled in Washington, where John graduated from Western High School in 1953 and from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1957. He became a U.S. citizen about that time and joined the Army after receiving a law degree from George Washington University in 1960.

His military decorations included the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal and two awards of the Legion of Merit.

In 1960, he married June Chung. Besides his wife, of Alexandria, survivors include two children, Justina Fugh of Arlington County and Jarrett Fugh of La Crescenta, Calif.; a sister, Helen Hays of Washington; and four grandchildren.

After his retirement from Enron in 2001, Gen. Fugh deepened his involvement with the Committee of 100, an elite Chinese-American advocacy organization.

While serving as the group's chairman, Gen. Fugh fulfilled a long effort by his family to [bury Stuart's ashes on Chinese soil](#). The educator and diplomat had died in 1962 after living for years in Washington under the care of Gen. Fugh's father.

The task had been complicated for decades by Mao Zedong's efforts to paint Stuart as a symbol of American imperialism. Neither the Stuart family nor Philip Fugh was able to surmount Chinese opposition to repatriating Stuart, who had been born in China in 1876 to Christian missionaries.

Gen. Fugh won an audience with powerful Chinese Politburo members, who granted their approval.

"This is a promise that has been fulfilled after half a century," Gen. Fugh told the New York Times. "Now, Ambassador Stuart and my father can rest in peace."