



## Tommy Ray Willard

November 3, 1944 - September 9, 2020

Willard, Tommy Ray age 75, died peacefully at home on September 9, 2020. Son of a sharecropper, he was born in NC to Harold F. and Lily “Chic” (Deaton) Willard. He is preceded in death by his brother Billy Willard of NC, and sisters Jean Henry and Peggy Ryan, also of NC. He leaves his wife, (Trish), Patricia (Cetone), and sons Aaron of Alaska and Thomas of Pennsylvania. He gained three additional children, Brian of California; Jeff of Colorado and Danielle of Florida with his marriage to Patricia, with two special recognition of Cheryl Bramini of Ohio and John Bews of Florida. He also leaves nine grandchildren.

Tommy attended NC State and received his BS, MS, PhD in Animal Science with majors in BioChemistry and Animal Nutrition. Second Lieutenant Willard served in the US Army, and was stationed in Germany during the Vietnam Era.

Through his profession, he devoted his life to the well being of companion animals, especially dogs and cats, and spent more than 48 years of his entire career to pet food development in the US, Europe and Asia. He became an independent nutritional consultant for ten years. Upon retiring, he mastered woodworking and produced one-of-kind tongue and groove handmade heirloom pieces.

A warm, funny, kind, and friendly man, who never met a stranger and was curious about everything! He was a true Renaissance Man! He loved his family, good food, good bourbon, good conversation, anything sweet or fried,

the Fall, traveling, jazz, country music, and appreciated nature's beauty. Tom lived a full life and leaves a legacy of memories to all he touched. He was proud of his contribution to his profession, respected all veterans and proud of his country and his military service. He will be long remembered, and when you think of him – smile.

A memorial service will be held on October 10, 2020 at The American Legion, Post 28, 94 W. Park Dr., Spartanburg, SC at 2PM.

If you wish, please make a contribution to Spartanburg Regional Hospice C/O Spartanburg Regional Foundation, PO Box 2624 Spartanburg, SC 29304 or your favorite charity in his name.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

OCT **10**. 2:00 PM (ET)

The American Legion, Post 28  
94 West Park Drive  
Spartanburg, SC 29306

# Tribute Wall



“ *Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of Tommy Ray Willard.*



---

October 10, 2020 at 11:56 AM



“ *He was a good neighbor and friend with always best advice and with a helping hand for everything. We will miss him. Hope we meet again.  
Beatrix, Thomas und Marvin*

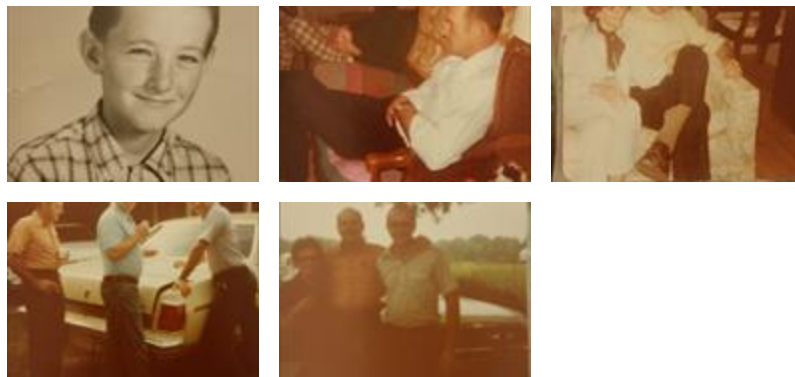


---

**Beatrix Langie** - October 09, 2020 at 09:15 PM

DK

“ Uncle Tommy was a light in our family. He had the gift of storytelling. I appreciated the delightful tales he shared of his youth, my dad, grandparents, and his siblings. I could count on him to offer wisdom when advice was requested, or sometimes when he just felt it was in order. He was a caretaker. He brought us a wonderful aunt, and we are fortunate to have her as a Willard. He and Trish were always supportive of family members, even attending a couple of my kid's sporting events. His loss will leave a profound void, but the memories will serve as a comfort. From the belly laughs to the deep discussions, every encounter will be a recollection to treasure. Peaceful Journey, my dear uncle. I love you. OXOXOX



Deborah W Kennedy - October 08, 2020 at 05:38 PM

LF

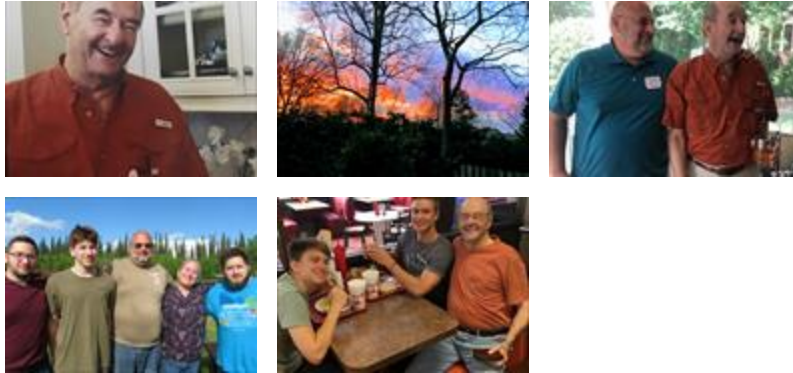
“ Love, Sara Bess Willard and Family purchased the Summer's Light Bouquet for the family of Tommy Ray Willard.



Love, Sara Bess Willard and Family - October 07, 2020 at 01:31 AM

PW

“ 7 files added to the album *Memories Album*



p. willard - October 06, 2020 at 08:55 AM



“ *Heavenly Light* was purchased for the family of Tommy Ray Willard.



October 05, 2020 at 10:19 AM



“ *Serene Reflections Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Tommy Ray Willard.



September 29, 2020 at 03:35 PM

TN

“ *The R&D Team at Glanbia Nutritionals purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Tommy Ray Willard.*

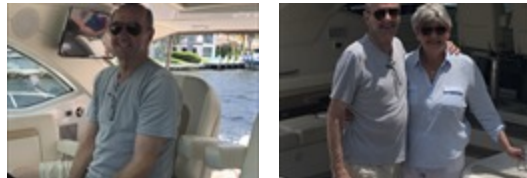


---

**The R&D Team at Glanbia Nutritionals** - September 29, 2020  
at 10:33 AM

MS

“ *God brought home one of his angels, but we lost a saint of a man.*



---

**miles sheahan** - September 29, 2020 at 08:04 AM

LL

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



---

**Liz Lovins** - September 21, 2020 at 05:43 PM

ZC

“ *I will remember first and foremost Tom's generosity and humor. Thank you Uncle Tom, for being at my side in 2000 when my father passed. Thank you for loving my aunt Trish, and making her so happy. Rest easy, enjoy heaven until we meet again.*  
*Zachary Cetone*

---

**Zachary cetone** - September 20, 2020 at 10:02 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Tommy Ray Willard.*



---

September 20, 2020 at 08:44 AM



“ *Tom was a wonderful supporter of ferrets in so many ways. My favorite memory was of him witnessing my tongue-lashing of the Kaytee representatives for putting freeze dried veggies in their ferret food. It was the start of a beautiful friendship. I will miss him.*

---

**Karen Purcell** - September 19, 2020 at 10:25 PM



“ *I remember the symposium where I met him. I enjoyed his talks, company, and his playfulness. My favorite memory occurred the final day while he was packing up and he was tossing plush ferrets in a box. I stopped and said loudly, "Ferret abuse, ferret abuse!" He looked up to see what I was talking about and caught my evil grin at my prank. It didn't take him long to realize I was teasing him about tossing the stuffiest into a box. He will be missed.*

---

**Pat Andrews** - September 19, 2020 at 04:27 PM



“ *I will always remember his gentle laughs and huge smiles whenever I, Wolfy, was up to my antics in the Ferrest Symposiums. This beautiful man is responsible for the health and happiness of countless ferrets due to his revolutionary food, back in the day, and his generosity. He will always be remembered in the ferrst community*

---

**Rebecca Stout** - September 18, 2020 at 10:33 PM

JB

“ My relationship with Tom is certainly one of a love and respect as father and son should be. Although not biological, Dr. Williard, ( my nick name for him ) was my mentor, colleague, advisor and best friend. He and Mom married in 1989 and from that day on our family benefitted from his love, knowledge and support. Tom brought his tough common sense Liberty, N.C. upbringing to each life challenge which made it much easier to relate to and understand. Having worked closely with Tom and Mom at their business, Performance Foods, Inc., I learned about the pet food industry from the manufacturing processes to the sales and business side under their tutelage. The most fascinating part was to watch how folks reacted to Dr. Williard’s knowledge on so many topics. He made you feel as if you were the only person in the room during a conversation and was most attentive to your point of view. His love and support for my family cannot be measured. Please enjoy the small postage stamp of picture memories included. Tom, you will forever be with me and a reminder of what’s truly important in life. Love you always. 🙏



---

Jeff Bateman - September 18, 2020 at 02:23 PM

BF

“ Tommy was such a part of my children hood memories. He was the uncle that I looked up to and thought the world of. He was only 7 years older than me and so many of my early memories in North Carolina included him. There were Christmas', firecrackers, and cherry bombs, lot of teasing, corn cob fights, etc. It was a given that we all help in the tobacco fields and there were a few incidences with tobacco worms tobacco sleds. When he was a teenager, he took me along on one of his dates, I had the best time. Not sure what his girlfriend thought though. Over the years we did not see each other very often. Mother kept us up on where he was and what he was doing. I will always cherish the time he spent with me after my dad passed. We shared our child hood memories and I learned more about my father than I ever knew. Tom thought of him as a brother and I know both mother and dad would have done anything for him. From the times we were around Tom and Trish it was evident that they had a very special relationship. You could see that they made each other happy. I truly believe Tom led a good life and lived it the way he wanted too. He will be missed but always be in my heart.



---

**Barb Fogleman** - September 18, 2020 at 01:04 AM

DW

“ Jaja's beautiful celebration with the entire family 2019! What a beautiful day ❤️



---

**Danielle Williams** - September 17, 2020 at 07:34 PM

DK

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



---

**Deborah W Kennedy** - September 17, 2020 at 05:00 PM

DW

“ Jaja was a wonderful role model, father and grandpa to us and we will miss all of his wisdom, support, encouragement and love. The kids loved all the stories from life early on to everyday experiences and we will miss his laughter but know he will always be with us! We love you JaJa ❤️ Danielle, Matthew & Sami

---

**Danielle Williams** - September 16, 2020 at 05:58 PM

BF

*Tom was an example to us all in life and was the same genuine caring man even towards the end of his life.*

*A laugh which was loud, hearty and larger than life, his interest in what his children were doing and his constant inquisitive nature will long be missed. His caring with each of our careers with advice and direction was a source of strength for us all, and this unique and gifted quality cannot be replaced. He was a true and genuine southern man raised with good morals and a strong foundation set by his parents and family. He left Liberty NC and went out into the world and conquered it, setting goals and reaching those goals rising to the top of his profession yet he always maintained that welcome comfort he brought each and every time you visited. He took care of his wife and family, and set an example of how one lives with integrity and true meaning.*

*Tom and mom were inseparable and spent over 30 years together, travelling the world and seeing new things and creating many memories that are now engrained in our minds. They are a pair, a force of nature which showed everyone what true love really is. Many will never know or have what they had. And for that not only were they lucky in love, but we all were privileged to be included in that wonderfully crazy zany one of a kind relationship we witnessed. They had their own code, a gesture, look or a laugh for no apparent reason other than they knew...and they would laugh, an inner joke that only they shared...*

*Thank you Tom, we had many walks, talks and discussions regarding so many various subjects that it is hard to fathom life without you. But here we now are...set on our path walking without the one we walked with for so long...your words and inner light are now our guidance, and we know you are there always.*

*You already knew how we felt about you as we were certain that you knew this before and during your diagnosis. You knew then. And you know now. Just because your gone doesn't mean we all stop down here loving and thinking about you.*

*We promised you that we will be ok and we will. It just will never be the same...*

*Brian, Louise, Nick, Steph and extended family*

---

**Brian and Louise Bateman and family** - September 16, 2020 at 06:51 PM

PW

“ 13 files added to the album *Memories Album*



---

**patricia willard** - September 16, 2020 at 05:48 PM

BF

*A life well lived and these photos are that proof.*

---

**Brian and Louise Bateman and family** - September 16, 2020 at 06:58 PM