



Donald Fear

May 4, 2025

Donald Wayne Fear, loving father, grandfather, teacher, mentor, friend, and artist of

Woodbridge, Virginia, passed away on May 3, 2025, a day after his 73rd birthday. He

recently received a lung cancer diagnosis, which he bravely fought until the end. Born in

McKeesport, Pennsylvania on May 2, 1952, to the late Howard and Thelma Jean (Dennis)

Fear, he later relocated to Morgantown, West Virginia, where he completed high school

and enlisted in the United States Air Force. He proudly served in Vietnam as member of the

Air Force's Military Police. During his tour of service, he found a passion for photography,

which was sparked by the purchase of a camera from a ranking officer.

Upon his return and honorable discharge, he continued to work in military services,

utilizing his newfound love of photography. He graduated from the Corcoran School of the

Arts (present day George Washington University), majoring in fine arts photography. He

completed his master's degree at the University of Delaware, where he was a

teaching

assistant and added a passion for teaching to his love of photography and the arts.

In the late 1980s, he was instrumental in the development of the Suitland High School

Visual and Performing Arts photography program. For 25 years, Don inspired and

influenced students as the photography teacher there, not only to excel in the arts but also

to be the best version of themselves. As a respected educator, he was a CBE Arts

Education Fellow and NAEA Teacher of the Year recipient. As an artist, Don's work was

represented by the Kathleen Ewing Gallery. His work was frequently shown both

throughout the D.C. metropolitan area and nationally, culminating in an exhibition at the

Hunter Museum of Art titled Not So Deep.

Throughout Don's life, he was an avid fisherman and lover of the outdoors. He regularly

volunteered at local parks and was instrumental in creating children's fishing tournaments. He loved the beach and the water. Don frequented the Outer Banks (NC),

Florida, and Wachapreague (VA) as well as other east coast beaches, often taking fishing

trips with his friends and family.

Don was preceded in death by his mother, father, and the love of his life, Jamie McClellan

Fear, after she fought a 13-year battle with cancer. Don was devoted to her beyond words

and documented her life with cancer in a show entitled Jamie's Journey,

featured at the
NIH Clinical Center. He loved his service dog, Fiona, with all his heart and for
over 18 years
was hardly seen without her at his side. In the final years of his life, Don
enjoyed spending
time with his longtime companion, Cui, and spending time with his friends and
neighbors,
whom he loved deeply, only second to his granddaughter Fenny.
Don is survived by his son Alan, daughter-in-law Deanne, granddaughter
Fenny, brothers
Howard and Alan, sisters Donna, Barbara, and Sherry, mother of his son,
Kathy Fear and
beloved student Marlon. He was a loving father, grandfather, teacher, mentor,
and was
cherished by his family, students, neighbors, and his community as a whole.
A memorial service and celebration of life will be held at 1 pm, Saturday, May
24, 2025, at
Miller Funeral Home, 3200 Golansky Blvd., Woodbridge, VA 22192. In lieu of
flowers,
donations may be made to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation via mail at
Chesapeake Bay
Foundation, Attn: Membership Department, 6 Herndon Avenue, Annapolis,
MD 21403 or
<https://tinyurl.com/mr346yhj>

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAY **24**. 1:00 PM (ET)

Miller Funeral Home & Crematory, Inc.
3200 Golansky Blvd.
Woodbridge, VA 22192
703-878-CARE (2273)
<https://millerfuneralhome.net/>

Tribute Wall



“ I planted a Memorial Tree for Don. I know he is at peace and with Jamie and Fiona. We will miss you friend but were lucky to have known you.
Maggie

Margaret (Maggie) - May 22, 2025 at 10:09 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Donald Fear.

May 22, 2025 at 10:06 AM



“ My condolences to the family.
Don was a good friend of my husband; Mark Power and they would often go fishing together down near our house on the Chesapeake Bay. After Mark died in 2020 Don was very kind to me and often sent texts on holidays to cheer me up. He understood grief after losing his wife Jamie and knew how difficult it was on holidays and birthdays.
I will always be very grateful to him for his beautiful, encouraging words. He was a kind, generous and lovely man.

Virginia Power - May 21, 2025 at 09:53 AM



“ Stan R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald Fear.

Stan R. - May 14, 2025 at 08:32 PM

J(

“ *Mr. Fear wasn't just a teacher. He was a mentor. I was a student at Suitland from '94 - '98 and my fondest memories were made in the VPA hallway, and especially in photography club. Mr. Fear had a tough exterior but it turned out that was just a passion for teaching. I've had many teachers in my life but he's the only one who has truly stood out for me. I still have an absolute love of photography, and still use film (as opposed to digital) regularly because of him. He will be incredibly missed. My prayers go out to his family and friends.*

Jennie Cairney (Smith) - May 14, 2025 at 11:15 AM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Donald Fear.*



May 13, 2025 at 08:50 AM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Donald Fear.*

May 13, 2025 at 08:50 AM

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“*Fearsome was someone that I sincerely thought of as a second father. He was easy to talk to, great at giving meaningful advice, and showed how deeply he could love and care about people. This man taught me how to view the world differently at the ripe delinquent age of 17 - behind a lens.*

Back when he was my photography mentor at Suitland High School, everyone else was afraid of him. Me, however, became his TA in a class of only 3 other students besides myself. The four of us saw Donald Fear in a different light. He gave us food, covered us when we were cold, gave us umbrellas because we were too young and dumb to know the importance of bringing them. He sought us out when we'd hide under the dark room tables to fall asleep. I can even recall other teachers snitching on me to him for skipping class and he'd drag me right back to where I should have been - The kind of person who really cared about you.

I'm lucky to have been molded by him for a short time into a better version of myself. He told me, "A person experiences two deaths in their lifetime. The first, a physical death. The second, when others no longer speak your name." I didn't know profound those words were until this moment.



Florence Bailey - May 12, 2025 at 10:37 PM

JK

“ Don and I first met while I was park manager at Leesylvania up until 2004. He and Will were fishing pier "addicts", and quickly joined the Friends of Leesylvania advocacy group. The 3 of us spent many a day catfishing from my boat over the years, and collaborating on their incredible Kids Fishing Tournaments. No better program have I ever witnessed in my 50+ years as a park ranger. Will miss him.
RIP!

James A Klakowicz - May 12, 2025 at 07:42 AM