



Arthur A. Varela Jr.

August 28, 1945 - April 20, 2023

Born in Washington, DC, Lex grew up in Alexandria, VA. He graduated from Duke University, having studied chemical engineering as well as history and the humanities. Following college, he worked in social services in Durham, NC, prior to earning his law degree at Antioch School of Law in Washington, DC.

He then began his career in environmental law with the US Environmental Protection Agency. During his career, Lex worked in mobile sources enforcement as well as handling many toxic chemicals cases, and directed the Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution. He worked as a Legislative Fellow at the U.S. Capital for Senator John Glenn. He and a colleague at EPA envisioned and created the field of Environmental Justice, which was supported by President Clinton. He was also very proud of the work that he did in collaborating with and representing many Native American tribes, in particular, the Mattaponi.

Lex was known for his quick wit and sense of humor. He enjoyed and was accomplished in many things. Tennis was a sport encouraged by his mother, Anna Dayett Varela, who had been the Women's Maryland State Champion. He was a tennis pro at Belle Haven Country Club and other country clubs in the DC area in his college years. He was a sports car enthusiast who built and raced cars, as well as restored and showed old English classic cars. His

collection included many Austin Healeys; an early prototype of the Jaguar XK 120; and an Aston Martin DB 4, which had been the NY Car Show car introducing the car to North America. Most recently, he enjoyed driving his Triumph Spitfire. He was also an early visionary and inventor in the field of hybrid electric vehicles.

While at Duke, he developed a love for Old Time Traditional fiddle music and learned to play claw hammer banjo. He sought out the older musicians and recorded fiddle and banjo tunes which had been handed down through the oral tradition from the earliest settlers in North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. He contributed to the Library of Congress music collections. He played at fiddler's conventions and led musical workshops at the Smithsonian Folklife Festivals on the mall in Washington, introducing many people to this traditional music, the precursor to Bluegrass. Lex was also an artist who became known for restoring and building banjos and violins and for his ivory and mother of pearl inlays.

Lex enjoyed life on the water in Easton, MD, from 1998 to present, where he contributed to many community services and events. Reflective of his civil rights support throughout his life, he was a leader in restoring the historic, small John Wesley church near Oxford, MD, now on the Harriet Tubman Historical Trail.

He is survived by his former wife, Marilyn Engle Livingood; by his children, Andrew Schuyler Varela and Cortnay Varela; his four grandchildren, Marley Rose, Alice Victoria, Killian Pierce, and Anne Bonny Varela; as well as his brother, Robert (Bob) Varela, his wife, Chris Morrison, and their two children, Meredith and John.

Tribute Wall



“ Arthur A. Varela Jr.

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ I am very sorry to learn that Alex passed away and extend sincere condolences to his family. Alex was incredibly generous and curious and talented. I admired his commitment to the environment and his community. Alex was one of a kind and always optimistic about the future. I saw him in Easton at the Avalon Theatre on St Patrick's Day and was looking forward to seeing him at more concerts over the summer. I will think of him often.

As an example of his generosity and creativity, here we are blowing out a candle on his birthday cake at Harry Browne's in Annapolis before a Seamus Kennedy concert back in 2018. Alex had this cake made to celebrate the publication of my book and had the cover reproduced on the icing! It was so thoughtful.



Virginia Smith - May 31, 2023 at 10:08 AM

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“ *My deepest condolences to Alex's family. He was a worldly guy with some elegant stories and a wide range of experiences. He brought me some of the inventions he had built. He invited me to the Avalon Theater on St Paddy's Day. In the pub before the show, we struck up conversations with several women. He was engaging! I finished the fuel injection project on his TR6 just as he left us. A toast to Alex! Joe Anderson*



Joe Anderson - May 01, 2023 at 05:48 PM