



David Leslie McQuay

November 13, 1944 - October 28, 2025

David Leslie McQuay, 80, of Tilghman, Maryland, passed away at Easton Memorial Hospital on Tuesday, October 28, 2025.

Dave was born on November 13, 1944, the son of Samuel T. McQuay and Irma Harrison McQuay. He graduated from St. Michaels High School in 1962, then began working at the Oxford Laboratory with their experimental Oyster Culture Program. In 1976, he left the lab and began working with his father, with whom he had apprenticed all through his high school years.

Samuel T. McQuay had learned the boatbuilding trade most prominently from his father-in-law, John B. Harrison, a second-generation boatbuilder known for building many sail-powered oystering vessels and log canoes. S.T. McQuay & Son in Wittman, Maryland, specialized in building and repairing local wooden commercial fishing and leisure boats, as well as spar and mast repairs.

When Sam McQuay passed away in 1979, Dave continued the business on his own. Over the years, he was a trusted local expert on several big jobs. At the time of his father's death, they had been given the task of restoring the log canoe, Flying Cloud, which had been brought down from New York in pieces. The boat had to be rebuilt and put back together. It was quite a job for one man, but also a joy and privilege to restore the beautiful boat his grandfather, John B. Harrison, had built originally.

Many other log canoes, as well as skipjacks and schooners, were worked on by Dave over the years, mostly repairing or replacing masts and spars. He also built several modern-style wooden boats, including a 40-ft. sport fisherman, two C-flex fiberglass workboats, and several small leisure boats and skiffs. He maintained one of the only working railways for hauling boats in the area and, in the 1980's and 90's, averaged hauling 35 boats per year for various maintenance and repair jobs. He prioritized helping local watermen—no matter the time of day or what other jobs he had underway—and getting them back on the water as soon as possible.

Dave came from a large family with multi-generational roots in Tilghman Island. He learned about boating, fishing, crabbing, oystering, and hunting at a young age and became a consummate outdoorsman. He loved to sail and was part of the crew on several different log canoes from the 1970's all the way through the early 2000's. He had vast knowledge of and love for local ecology, seasonal changes, birds, and wildlife. Waterfowling was undoubtedly his favorite pastime.

In the late 1980's, Dave came highly recommended to Mr. Peter Tulloch of New York who had purchased Coaches Island off Tilghman to use as a hunting retreat and was looking for a caretaker. Dave took the job in addition to running his boatbuilding business and oversaw island maintenance, including groundskeeping, boat maintenance, home building and repairs, hiring/logistics of service contractors, and more. He kept the job until 2024.

As a teenager, Dave also began a lifetime of local service to his community. He joined the Tilghman Island Volunteer Fire Department and served as a firefighter for many years, then began to take on administrative duties, including serving multiple terms as President. He also was a member and Past President of the Talbot County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association and

the Eastern Shore Volunteer Fireman's Association. In 2008, he was appointed a board member of the Maryland State Firefighters Association Volunteer Company Assistance Fund. In 2009, he was inducted into the Maryland State Firefighters Association Hall of Fame. Dave also served on the Talbot County Short Term Rental Board for several years.

Additionally, Dave was a member and Past Master of Granite Lodge #177 A.F. and A.M. in St. Michaels, Maryland. He was also a member of the Scottish Rite.

Dave shared his love of the Eastern Shore and local way of life and service with his family. He was a devoted husband, father, and friend. He was known for his dedication, generosity, humor, and ability to tell a great story. Especially in his later years, he was dedicated to preserving local history and sharing his knowledge and family memorabilia with local museums, co-historians, and friends.

Dave is survived by his beloved wife of 48 years, Helen Cummings McQuay; his children Vicki (Rob) Pierce, Jessica McQuay, and David (Patti) McQuay; his grand-daughter, Rylie Pierce; his sister, Lynda (Pedro) Mora; his nieces, Lynda (Ryan) Thibodaux and Rebecca Ball; and his nephews, Daniel (Heather) Mora and Billy (Eve) Ball. He was preceded in death by his nephew, David Mora.

A funeral service will be held on Friday, November 7, 2025, at the Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home, 200 S. Harrison Street in Easton, Maryland, at noon. Friends and family may visit that day starting at 11 a.m. Burial will follow the service at Spring Hill Cemetery in Easton, Maryland.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution to Tilghman Island Volunteer

Fire Department or Tilghman Fire Co Ladies Auxiliary.

Cemetery Details

New Spring Hill

Aurora Street
Easton, MD 21601

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV 7. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home
200 S. Harrison Street
EASTON
EASTON, MD 21601

Funeral Service

NOV 7. 12:00 PM (ET)

Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home
200 S. Harrison Street
EASTON
EASTON, MD 21601

Graveside Service

NOV 7. 1:30 PM (ET)

New Spring Hill
Aurora Street
Easton, MD 21601

Tribute Wall



“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of David Leslie McQuay*



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - December 03, 2025 at 08:43 AM

AS

“ *Helen, so sorry for your loss of David.*

Andrea Shoener - November 07, 2025 at 01:42 PM

SP

“ *Susan P. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Leslie McQuay.*

Susan P. - November 07, 2025 at 08:49 AM

SF

“ *Steve & Tracy Campbell and Family purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of David Leslie McQuay.*



Steve & Tracy Campbell and Family - November 06, 2025 at 04:52 PM

BD

“ Dear Vicki, Jess, Helen & Dave,
I'm truly sorry for the loss of your father and husband. He was always so kind to me growing up, even when Vicki and I were not on our best behavior 😞 I will always remember him fondly as a gentle, soft spoken, easy, kind man. ❤️ Tillman will never be the same! Love and prayers with you all.

Britta Derstine - November 05, 2025 at 11:51 AM

BD

“ Dear Vicki, Jess, Helen & Dave,
I'm truly sorry for the loss of your father and husband. He was always so kind to me growing up, even when Vicki and I were not on our best behavior 😞 I will always remember him fondly as a gentle, soft spoken, easy, kind man. ❤️ Tillman will never be the same! Love and prayers with you all.

Britta Derstine - November 05, 2025 at 11:51 AM

NR

I'm so very sorry for your loss. You are surrounded by love and support. Nanci

nanci rankin - November 05, 2025 at 03:23 PM

TF

“ The Salmon Family purchased the Serene Retre at for the family of David Leslie McQuay.



The Salmon Family - November 05, 2025 at 09:23 AM

TF

“ *The Salmon Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Leslie McQuay.*

The Salmon Family - November 05, 2025 at 09:23 AM

RO

“ *Rondy purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of David Leslie McQuay.*



Rondy - November 04, 2025 at 01:47 PM

LG

“ *Luther And Lori Geisler lit a candle in memory of David Leslie McQuay*



Luther and Lori Geisler - November 03, 2025 at 10:52 PM



“ *Ruth Ann Fluharty lit a candle in memory of David Leslie McQuay*



Ruth Ann Fluharty - November 03, 2025 at 04:36 PM

YF

“ Your Heartstream Friends planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Leslie McQuay.

Your Heartstream Friends - November 03, 2025 at 12:29 PM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of David Leslie McQuay.



November 03, 2025 at 12:29 PM

WL

“ Winnie Lowery lit a candle in memory of David Leslie McQuay



Winnie Lowery - November 03, 2025 at 10:34 AM

LK

“David was one of our “Tilghman Treasures.” He loved Tilghman, the history of Tilghman, the families of Tilghman and was always willing to share his stories and history which included the boat building legacy of John B Harrison, the Covington’s and his own boat building legacy with his father Sam with all who asked. He was a valuable resource for the Tilghman’s Waterman’s Museum. We were privileged to honor him at our annual Blessing of the Fleet ceremony in 2024. We will miss you Dave! Thank you for your contribution to our community! Our sincere condolences go out Helen and the family. Sincerely, Linda Haddaway King and Rob King



Linda Haddaway King - November 02, 2025 at 10:44 PM

TL

“Helen. So sorry to hear of the loss of your husband. You are in my thoughts and prayers at this time. Love Teresa

Teresa Lewis - November 02, 2025 at 08:07 PM

EB

“Edna Barry lit a candle in memory of David Leslie McQuay



Edna Barry - November 02, 2025 at 01:20 PM

LW

“ *Larry And Lynne Wilkins sent a virtual gift in memory of David Leslie McQuay*



Larry and Lynne Wilkins - November 02, 2025 at 12:50 PM

SD

“ *Helen my sincerest condolences to you and your family.*



sherry dolby - November 02, 2025 at 12:47 PM

SJ

“ *Dave you will be missed by all !!!*



sol james - November 02, 2025 at 12:39 PM

TM

“ *Rodger & Terry McQuay*



Terry McQuay - November 02, 2025 at 12:07 PM

MC

“ *Mark & Brenda Cummings sent a virtual gift in memory of David Leslie McQuay*



Mark & Brenda Cummings - November 02, 2025 at 08:26 AM

DM

“ *Danial Mister lit a candle in memory of David Leslie McQuay*



Danial Mister - November 02, 2025 at 07:41 AM

PF

“ *Phil Foster lit a candle in memory of David Leslie McQuay*



Phil Foster - November 02, 2025 at 01:35 AM

EC

“ *Ed Eason & Laura Chafey planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Leslie McQuay.*

Ed Eason & Laura Chafey - November 01, 2025 at 07:39 AM

EC

“ Ed Eason & Laura Chafey purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of David Leslie McQuay.



Ed Eason & Laura Chafey - November 01, 2025 at 07:39 AM

DJ

“ Helen, Jessica, David, Vicky and the Mcquay family, JC and I are sending you all lots of love and hugs. May God wrap his loving comforting arms around you all at this sad time and the days to come.
Lots of Love,
Debbie and JC



Debbie & JC - October 31, 2025 at 08:56 AM

JM

Thank you so much, Miss Debbie ❤️❤️

Jessica McQuay - October 31, 2025 at 11:01 PM

BS

“ Quack, as most people in the SMHS Class of 1962 knew him, was one of the nicest and funniest people in the class. I knew David and his family well.
Our sincere condolences to the McQuay's and may God Bless his soul.

Bryan W. Steilkie Sr.
Norma H. Steilkie
SMHS Class of 62



Bryan W. Steilkie Sr. - October 30, 2025 at 05:25 PM

JM

Thanks so much for sharing, Bryan!

Jessica McQuay - October 31, 2025 at 07:38 AM

BG

“ *Bill And Susan Grauel lit a candle in memory of David Leslie McQuay*



Bill and Susan Grauel - October 30, 2025 at 04:15 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of David Leslie McQuay.*



October 30, 2025 at 03:36 PM

CT

“ *Condolences from Carolyn and Herb Timms*



Carolyn Timms - October 30, 2025 at 09:02 AM

CW

“ *Craig & Patti Willis lit a candle in memory of David Leslie McQuay*



Craig & Patti Willis - October 30, 2025 at 08:25 AM

NH

Helen, I'm so sorry to hear about about your loss. Sending thoughts and prayers💕💕

Nancy Henry - November 03, 2025 at 09:44 AM

BA

David was a kind person. My dad had a lot of respect for him when they were in the Tilghman Island Fire department together. My condolences to his family.

Barbara Ayres - November 07, 2025 at 03:16 PM