



Donald Francis Lawton

January 25, 1934 - February 14, 2026

Preston resident Donald Francis Lawton passed away peacefully on February 14, 2026, at University of Maryland Shore Medical Center at Easton. He was 92.

Don was born January 25, 1934, in Fall River, Massachusetts to Walter and Doris (Hitt) Lawton. He spent his early years on his grandparents' dairy farm in Westport, Massachusetts before moving to New Bedford, where he enjoyed watching the fishing vessels arrive in the harbor to count and process their bounty.

He graduated from New Bedford High School in 1952 and then attended New Bedford Institute of Technology, where he studied chemical engineering before enlisting in the United States Air Force. While in the military, he was stationed at Fort Belvoir with duty stations in Okinawa, Turkey and Libya. He completed his service in Washington, D.C. where he met his wife of 65 years JoAnn (Combs).

Don and JoAnn married February 27, 1960, and moved to Hyattsville and later Bowie, Maryland where they raised their children, Gary, Eric (Joanna), Kenny (Anne), and Linda (David) Houck, before settling in Preston.

He spent most of his professional career with the District of Columbia

Department of Public Works, working as a bridge inspector and later as a consultant with RK&K Engineering.

He enjoyed playing golf with the same foursome every Wednesday during his working years, all of whom have preceded him in death. He was an avid fisherman and hunter, and a longtime member of the Berwyn Rod & Gun Club. He also had a lifelong appreciation for thoroughbred racing, but nothing brought him more joy than watching his granddaughters, Alexa and Emilee, compete in sports.

He is survived by his beloved wife, JoAnn; his children Gary; Eric (Joanna); Kenny (Anne); and Linda (David); and granddaughters Alexa and Emilee. He is also survived by his brother Bruce (Joyce) Lawton, niece Wendy (Tom) Scott and nephew Glenn of Westport, Massachusetts. He is also survived by several cousins and extended family members, most of whom reside in New England.

Interment with military honors will be held at Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery in Hurlock, Maryland.