



Thomas David Witten "Dave"

December 6, 1943 - February 22, 2025

It is with great sadness that the family of Thomas David Witten announces his passing on February 22, 2025, after a courageous battle with cancer. Dave was 81, but he lived a life that felt much larger than numbers on a page. While he may have lost the fight against cancer, anyone who knew him can agree he was a champion in every other way.

Born in Washington, DC, on December 6, 1943, Dave was the son of Shurl George Witten, Sr. and Ruth Rollins Witten—both of whom passed before him, leaving a legacy of strength and hard work that Dave carried with him throughout his life. Sadly, Dave's brothers, Shurl George Witten, Jr. and Donald W. Witten, Sr., as well as his sister-in-law, Belinda Witten and niece, Tara Jenkins, also predeceased him, but not without leaving their own indelible mark.

Dave is survived by the love of his life, his wife of 58 years, Brenda Pope Witten. While they didn't have children of their own, they were fortunate enough to borrow many children from family and friends over the years, a gift that brought them immeasurable joy. Those kids—who know who they are—have been blessed over the years with numerous seasoned words of advice, solicited or not (but always appreciated), that will impact them the rest of their lives. They had many four-legged children over the years. Some have already greeted him at the Rainbow Bridge—likely demanding treats, belly rubs and no doubt wagging their tails in welcome.

He is also survived by his brother-in-law, Gary Pope (Huntsville, AL), and

sister-in-law, Nancy Hutt (San Francisco, CA), who would have been the first to tell you that Dave could always be counted on for a good story (and possibly a practical joke or two). His nephews—Donald W. Witten, Jr., Evan Pope, and Jiles Pope—and his nieces, Hahnna Pope and Julie Pope, are all part of his far-reaching family who will remember him with love, laughter, and maybe a few colorful words. Dave's great-nieces and nephews—Cierra Witten, Alex Witten, Parker Wonner, and Victor Wonner—were given plenty of stories to tell for years to come.

Dave was a proud graduate of Durham High School, Durham, NC, in 1963, and Chowan University, Murfreesboro, NC, from 1963-1965, where he was an exceptional football player and earned a spot in the Chowan University Hall of Fame. Let's be honest: he probably liked playing football more than schoolwork. His love for sports stayed with him throughout his life and the Chowan University Athletics program will always have a special place in his heart (and in his charitable donations).

He went on to serve his country honorably as a member of the North Carolina Army National Guard, reaching the rank of E6.

Dave's professional career spanned several decades, with notable positions including Food Service Director at Easton Memorial Hospital for Marriott Corporation as well as District Manager for Marriott Corporation Healthcare Division. He also became the President of Canteen Corporation, overseeing the mental hospital operations in Kuwait and managing over 300 facilities across the country. He was honored with the President's Club award at Canteen for achieving over \$1 million in new sales in a single year and was named in the Who's Who Worldwide in 2003/2004 and for Corporate Leadership in 1994/95.

In 1985, he founded Food Management Group, Inc. (FMG), a company that became a leader in providing food management services to over 300 hospitals, long-term care facilities, drug rehabilitation centers, and religious organizations.

If there was a cafeteria or a catering service involved, you could bet Dave had

a hand in it—and not just to make sure the food was good, but that everyone was well-fed in every way. Dave retired in 2019 after decades of dedicated service to his industry.

Outside of his professional life, Dave was deeply involved in his community. As a young man, he served as the President of Talbot Pop Warner Football, coached the Team Rams Pop Warner Football in Easton, MD, coaching countless kids - mostly so he could be that guy shouting motivational speeches at the sidelines (he did love a good pep talk). He was the President of the Kiwanis Club in Easton, a proud member of the Elks Lodge and was honored as a Kentucky Colonel for his service.

Dave was an avid collector of cars—if it had wheels, he probably wanted it. From a Model A to a Viper, and even a firetruck, his garage was more like a showroom. One of his greatest thrills was taking the Viper for a spin on the Indy 500 track.

Dave's love for his family, his work, and his community will be his legacy. His passing leaves a hole in many hearts, but his humor, generosity, and guidance will live on in the countless people he touched.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to Barbara Hopkins for the love and care she gave Dave during his illness. They shared a deep and mutual bond.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to one of Dave's favorite causes: Chowan University Athletics (Football Program): [athletics@chowan.edu] or 252-398-1239; The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research: [<http://www.michaeljfox.org>]; Kawasaki Disease Foundation: [<https://www.kdfoundation.org>]; or Blind Veteran's Association: [<https://www.bva.org>].

A celebration of Dave's life will take place on Saturday, March 1, 2025, at Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home, 200 S Harrison St, Easton, MD 21601. Visitation at 10 a.m. prior to service and Funeral at 11 a.m. where friends and family will undoubtedly share some unforgettable stories about Dave's time on this Earth...some of which might even be true.

We will miss you, Dave, but we know you are still cracking jokes and eating good food...no doubt there is more laughter in heaven today.

Cemetery Details

Oxford Cemetery

Oxford Cemetery Rd
Oxford, MD 21654

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 1. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

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

Funeral Service

MAR 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home, P.A. - Easton
200 S. Harrison St.
Easton, MD 21601

Graveside Service

MAR 1 (ET)

Oxford Cemetery
Oxford Cemetery Rd
Oxford, MD 21654

Tribute Wall



“ *Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of Thomas David Witten "Dave"* ”



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - February 25, 2025 at 08:50 PM

SJ

“ *I'm so sorry for your loss, I pray that God will strengthen you all and most of all Mrs. Whitten at this time. I just learned of Mr. Whitten passing and it truly hurt me. For the short time I knew Mr. Whitten, he showed love and friendship to myself and my husband. It was an honor to know both Mr and Mrs. Whitten. Rest now my friend.....* ”



Sanja Johnson - April 10, 2025 at 10:12 PM

WW

“ *I considered Dave Witten to be a friend for over 65 years. The world has lost one of its great characters. My thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Brenda.* ”

william wilson - April 04, 2025 at 04:47 PM

KG

“ One of a kind! Will miss his occasional visits and trips. Good guy who would give you the shirt off his back. "Hillbilly Dave" We pray that you rest in Peace. Gus and Kay Gregory.

Kostas Gus Gregory - March 04, 2025 at 02:53 PM

WS

“ Dave & i have been friends since we played football at Chowan jr. College in 1963. He and Brenda were simply the "BEST". Dave always had a big Smile, laugh and great update story to Share. God Bless you my Friend. You will always be in our Heart. I know you will be trying to find your golf swing in Heaven. Love you Dave.

Woodie Safrit - February 28, 2025 at 07:23 PM

SD

“ I will miss Dave greatly! I will miss his Love, Guidance and Friendship
I Praise the Lord that Brenda and Dave have been in life for 40+ years!
Heaven welcomed a warrior when Dave arrived!
I took these pictures during a visit in January 2025. I will cherish that visit for all of my Life!
I love you Brenda



Scott Dickerson - February 28, 2025 at 03:39 PM

JO

“ *Dave you were and always will be one cool dude, that I remember while working for Mike Newnam*



Joe Ostrowski - February 28, 2025 at 12:28 PM

BL

“ *Bonnie S. Lowrance lit a candle in memory of Thomas David Witten "Dave"*



Bonnie S. Lowrance - February 28, 2025 at 11:14 AM

JT

“ *Jeff Turiczek purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Thomas David Witten "Dave".*



Jeff Turiczek - February 27, 2025 at 04:30 PM

JS

“ *Jim & Niki Shaheen planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Thomas David Witten "Dave".*

Jim & Niki Shaheen - February 27, 2025 at 03:31 PM

JS

“ Jim & Niki Shaheen purchased the Serenity Wreath for the family of Thomas David Witten "Dave".



Jim & Niki Shaheen - February 27, 2025 at 03:31 PM



“ Magnificent Life Spray was purchased for the family of Thomas David Witten "Dave".



February 27, 2025 at 01:34 PM

LM

“ Love, Bob, Mary Lynn, Kelly and Mike purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of Thomas David Witten "Dave".



Love, Bob, Mary Lynn, Kelly and Mike - February 26, 2025 at 09:00 PM