



## Walter Lea Thomas IV

March 21, 1959 - January 24, 2021

Walter Lea Thomas IV, 61, of Milton, NC died January 24, 2021 at Hospice Home in Burlington, NC after a courageous battle with cancer.

Walter Lea is the son of Marian Thompson Thomas, of Milton, and the late Walter Lea Thomas III. In addition to his mother, he is also survived by his wife, Julie McSherry Thomas, son Walter “Lea” Thomas V of Winston-Salem, NC, brother Marc C. Thomas (Diane), sisters Marilea Thomas Compton and Elizabeth Thomas Pressley (Robert/”Bo”), sister-in-law Ginny McSherry Foster (Andy), numerous nieces, nephews, great nieces, and nephews.

Walter Lea was born March 21, 1959 in Danville, VA. Walter Lea was a graduate of George Washington High School and Appalachian State University where he earned his Bachelor’s degree in Business. He was a member of the Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity. He was currently employed as a Real Estate Reviewer for the Department of Transportation in Winston-Salem, NC. Walter Lea was a retired volunteer fireman and active member of Milton United Methodist Church. He served on Milton’s town council and as its mayor for two terms.

Due to COVID-19, a private celebration of his life will be conducted on Saturday, January 30, 2021, with the Reverend John Upton and Reverend Adam Benson officiating. A celebration of life for friends will be conducted at a

later date.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in Walter Lea's memory to Milton United Methodist Church in care of John Y. Thomas: 8085 Hwy 62 N Milton NC 27305 and/or Hospice Home: 914 Chapel Hill Rd Burlington NC 27215.

Wrenn-Yeatts Funeral Home is respectfully serving the Thomas family.

# Tribute Wall

WH

“ *Walter was a very nice man and we enjoyed some good motorcycle rides and rallies together. I didn't know him well but my life is richer for having known him.*

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**Walter Holberg** - September 27, 2023 at 08:09 AM

BW

“ *Walter Lea was a very unforgettable person. If you ever met him, you wouldn't leave his presence without a smile and a story about Milton, the farm, family, and his love of singing! He kept us in the Raleigh Appraisal office in a positive manner with a promising future! He will be sorely missed by all on this earth, but I can see him in heaven strumming his guitar, singing with a never-ending smile on his face! Peace and joy until we see each other again in our eternal home!*  
*Barbara*

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**Barbara Whitaker** - February 03, 2021 at 05:24 PM

FL

“ *Falina Long lit a candle in memory of Walter Lea Thomas IV*



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**Falina Long** - February 01, 2021 at 09:31 AM


DR

“ I worked with Walter Lea when he was in the Raleigh Appraisal office of NCDOT. He always had a smile on his face and a story to tell. It was a blessing to get to know Walter Lea and I will always remember him fondly.

*Donna Rodgers*

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**Donna Rodgers** - January 29, 2021 at 01:51 PM

 Brad  
Lopp

“ I love Walter Lea very much. It was so much fun to work and fellowship with Walter Lea. Walter Lea was an awesome man. I loved the way he worked and played and lived his life. And boy did Walter Lea every have some stories. He would just start into a story talking about all kinds of people, I knew nothing about, as if I was best friends with them and was expected to know all the backstory about all their crazy exploits. It was a treat to be around Walter Lea. Yea, Walter Lea was a talker, and a really good one at that. He was such a good man. Even though we didn't work in the same office the last few years, I continued to appreciate being friends with him. I really miss Walter Lea and I am so thankful for him being part of my life. I couldn't help but to be a better person from just being around him. It's funny how certain people have such a positive influence on your life. I'm thankful for Walter Lea. I love and miss him :)

*Brad Lopp*

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**Brad Lopp** - January 27, 2021 at 08:31 PM

Brad  
Lopp

“ 4 files added to the album Raleigh Appraisal Office



Brad Lopp - January 27, 2021 at 08:10 PM

KH

“ Karen Poole Henderson lit a candle in memory of Walter Lea Thomas IV



Karen Poole Henderson - January 27, 2021 at 08:06 PM

KH

“ Julie, Mrs Thomas, Lea, Marilea, Marc, Libba & the Thomas family,

*Each of you are in our thoughts and prayers. The last day I saw Walter Lea was at Church the day after he & Julie were married, he was smiling from ear to ear and laughing. Take comfort Julie knowing you were the reason for the smiles.*

*Karen Poole Henderson  
Anne Poole*

Karen Poole Henderson - January 27, 2021 at 08:06 PM

BL

“ *Walter Lea and I were college roommates and it is a sad day for me to read of his passing. When I lived in Singapore and he was starting his fight with cancer we spent multiple hours on Skype calls catching up and sharing stories of life. He was a big guy with a bigger heart and always made me laugh.*

*Wally Lea will miss you brother. RIP and I'm sure you are bringing your big laugh to heaven right now! Make the angels smile my old friend.*

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**Bill Liebler** - January 27, 2021 at 07:10 AM

LP

*Julie it's so sad to hear of your loss...glad you got to spend many happy years wit Walter Lee...prayers to you sweet friend and all the family..🙏❤️*

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**Linda Prevette** - January 31, 2021 at 05:43 PM

DH

“ *Never saw Walter Lea without a smile. He always made me laugh. Bless his family during this time.*

*Debbie and Scott Halbrook.*

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**Debbie Halbrook** - January 26, 2021 at 09:08 PM



“ *Bountiful Rose Basket was purchased for the family of Walter Lea Thomas IV.*



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January 26, 2021 at 07:57 PM

YM

“ Just hearing the name "Walter Lea" put an instant smile on your face. Wishing the entire Thomas family good spirits always.



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**Yvonne & Kallie McKinney** - January 26, 2021 at 06:50 PM

RM

“ Rest In Peace my Friend.

*Reginald L. McNeill*  
*NCDOT*

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**Reginald McNeill** - January 26, 2021 at 06:22 PM

LR

“ To the Thomas family,  
I send my heart felt condolences. Walter Lea was a true Southern gentleman and it has been such a pleasure to know through Don for a decade. He greeted everyone with a smile and a hug. I am not alone in saying that his large presence will greatly missed.

*Sincerely,*  
*Laura Reid*

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**Laura Reid** - January 26, 2021 at 04:57 PM

“First, I want to share my deepest sympathies with Walter Lea’s family. I know he will be missed greatly but also know that he left a great deal of optimism with each of those he touched. I wish you only the happiest of memories and to share some of mine.

*I moved from Bethesda MD to Milton in June of 1969 when my mother, Nancy Hankins Scott, remarried Mr. George L. Scott of Milton. It was a big environmental and cultural shift for me, my brother Tony Sylvester and, to a lesser extent (just due to her young age), my sister Pam Sylvester Kilpatrick. I have previously credited Mr. John Scott and his wife Mrs. Jean Scott with introducing these “yankee” kids to the Milton community in an incredibly positive light. I feel this paved the way for our acceptance by and integration into our new community. I mention this because Uncle John and Aunt Jean influenced positive opinions in the adult population on our behalf. This is not the whole story and what I share now is another particularly important part of this memory that I have inexplicably failed to share previously.*

*Now, I must mention that my mother and Mrs. Marian Thomas were old college friends from their time together at Randolph-Macon Woman’s College (now Randolph College) in Lynchburg, VA. As a result, some of the first “new friends” we developed in the summer of 1969 included both Marc and Walter Lea Thomas. I do not know if or how much Mrs. Marian Thomas might have influenced her sons to be congenial with the new transplants, but I never sensed that either was influenced to behave in any way that did not come naturally. Marc was a year ahead of me in school and took more of the teacher role, enlightening me as to the customs and activities in our new community. Walter Lea was in the same grade as Tony and was more inquisitive regarding the customs and activities in Bethesda. He eagerly pointed out those which would need modification (or dismissal) if we were to get along in our new community. The Thomas family introduced us to the world of Hyco Lake, including boating and water skiing, and entertained us at their house there.*

*One of the scariest things about our relocation was entering school in late summer when we knew almost no one, but we did know a very few. I must now credit both Marc and Walter Lea with helping to pave way for our acceptance by and integration into our new school community as they influenced positive opinions in that environment.*

*Lastly, I want to mention that it is clear to me in hindsight that Mrs. Marian Thomas also deserves a great deal of credit and thanks for introducing the “yankee” kids to the Milton community in a positive light. Thanks to my late mom for building and maintaining such a meaningful friendship that eventually benefitted her children when they really needed it.*

*With much gratitude toward and respect for the Thomas family,*

*W. Arthur (Artie) Sylvester*

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**W. Arthur Sylvester** - January 26, 2021 at 01:53 PM

BA

“ *Barbara Alston lit a candle in memory of Walter Lea Thomas IV*



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**Barbara Alston** - January 26, 2021 at 12:42 PM

BA

*I'm so sorry to hear about Walter Lee my prayers are with y'all and the family*

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**Barbara Alston** - January 26, 2021 at 12:43 PM

DE

“ *Walter Lea was full of interesting stories, some may have been exaggerated a little, but also full of little wisdoms that will stay with me forever.....he always brought a smile and didn't know a stranger... he will be missed but never forgotten. I'm sure the party has moved with him to his new home....it was my pleasure to know him.*

Deneane - January 26, 2021 at 12:25 PM

ST

“ *My heart aches for the Thomas family.*

Steve Terry - January 26, 2021 at 11:29 AM

DO

“ *Dear family so sorry for your loss! All of you are in our thoughts and prayers!*

david owen - January 26, 2021 at 10:47 AM

JS

“ *With love and deepest sympathy  
Joy & Jack Satterfield*



Joy & Jack Satterfield - January 25, 2021 at 10:23 PM

WP

“ *You are in our thoughts & prayers*

William Parsons - January 25, 2021 at 08:44 PM

SF

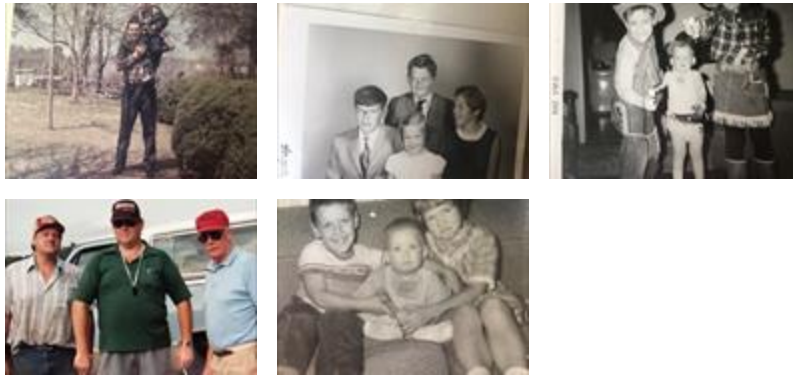
“ *Suzanne Foster lit a candle in memory of Walter Lea Thomas IV*



Suzanne Foster - January 25, 2021 at 08:34 PM



“ *136 files added to the album Memories Album*



Wrenn-Yeatts Funeral Homes - January 25, 2021 at 05:53 PM

PG

*Time is Golden but so are all the wonderful memories of the love you and Walter Lea had !! One day the sun will shine and the darkness will be no more ?? Love and Prayers to all the Family !!*

Patsy Graves - January 31, 2021 at 06:22 PM

MK

*To the family and friends of Walter Lea, I am so VERY sorry for your loss. Walter Lea was such a great man that touched many lives. We both had the same type of cancer and I actually met Walter at the NCDOT Appraisal Office. He heard I had the same cancer and pulled me into his office. I was deep in my cancer fight and struggling. Walter talked to me for several hours that day and other days. We had the same doctor and from what I understand; Walter Lea helped several other cancer patients as well. Walter spread much needed hope. I will never forget Walter Lea Thomas, the world lost a good one, but I am sure of one thing, Walter is smiling down on us from heaven and will always be in our hearts!*

*Rest In Peace brother, much respect for you.*

*Mike Kotarba*

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**Mike Kotarba** - January 31, 2021 at 08:10 PM