



David Wade Underwood

October 20, 1955 - April 28, 2024

A friend to countless people around the world, David Underwood, age 68, of Searcy, Arkansas died Sunday, April 28, after a short illness.

David was born October 20, 1955 in Duncan, Oklahoma to R. David and Myra (Wade) Underwood, who preceded him in death. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Jan (Lawyer) Underwood; sons and daughters-in-law Matt and Liz (Lee) Underwood of Searcy and Luke and Juliana (Stevens) Underwood of Little Rock, Arkansas; sister and brother-in-law Rebecca and David Dorfmuller of Madison, Alabama; brother and sister-in-law Bryan and Celestie Underwood of Roswell, Georgia; grandchildren Ellie, Thomas, Jess, Anderson, Simon and Scarlett Underwood; several nieces and nephews and a host of friends.

Visitation is Thursday, May 2, from 5-7 p.m., at Downtown Church of Christ in Searcy, with the memorial service Friday, May 3 at 10 a.m. at Downtown Church. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the David Underwood Memorial Endowed Scholarship at Harding University or the African Christian Hospital. <https://harding.edu/give/davidunderwood.html> or African Christian Hospitals at <https://ihcf.net>.

David and Jan were longtime members of the Downtown Church, where he served as both a deacon and shepherd. He loved the global church and

counted among his close friends many ministers and pastors around the world.

A 1974 graduate of Mars Hill Bible School in Florence, Alabama, and a 1978 graduate of Harding University, David spent his early formative years in Memphis, where his father was minister of the Germantown Church of Christ. His parents served as missionaries in the African nations of Nigeria (1965-66) and Liberia (1970-72). Upon returning from the mission field, they lived in the Florence area.

Sports and music were two of David's personal passions. He was the consummate Alabama Crimson Tide and Harding Bison fan. He coached Kensett's pee-wee boys basketball teams and refereed high school basketball games for several years. While his musical tastes were broad and eclectic, he loved the Beatles and the singer-songwriters of the 1970s (James Taylor, Jackson Browne, Carole King, Cat Stevens and Jim Croce) and the soul classics (Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder, among others). He loved James Michener novels, old western films and any movie starring Robert Duvall.

Perhaps David's greatest passions were his six grandchildren, who affectionately called him Pop-Pop. David rarely missed a sporting event or activity in which his six grandchildren participated.

David began his career as a teacher in Memphis' Springhill Elementary School but soon returned to Searcy where he taught fifth and sixth grade at Kensett Elementary School for 15 years. He briefly worked at First Security Bank before starting a 25-year tenure in August 1998 as a fundraiser at Harding University, a work that he dearly loved.

He raised millions of dollars in support of student scholarships, endowments and capital projects. More importantly, he developed bonds with his donors

that went beyond typical business relationships. Many of his donors considered him family, a testament to his gregarious personality and ability to never meet a stranger.

His sister, Becky, well described his mutual affection with all who knew him: “In Africa (and probably elsewhere), Dave always knew everyone, from the beggars on the corner to the people in the embassies. And everyone always liked Dave. Every time I ran into someone associated with Harding in any way who also knew Dave, they would say, and I quote, ‘Oh, I just love him.’ “

Indeed, everyone loved David Underwood.

Arrangements are entrusted to Powell Funeral Home of Searcy. www.powellfuneralhome.net

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

MAY 2. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (cst)

Downtown Church of Christ
900 N Main St
Searcy, AR 72143-3712
(501) 268-5383

Tribute Wall



“ *Powell Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of David Wade Underwood*



Powell Funeral Home & Cremation Services - May 02, 2024 at 11:28 AM

WE

“ *So sorry for your loss. Loved what he meant to our kiddos as KES. Love, Wendy Ellis*

Wendy Ellis - May 03, 2024 at 05:38 PM

JB

So very sorry to hear of the passing of David. Thinking of your family Jan. We surely will miss his infectious smile. Love Janet

janet Bawcom - May 05, 2024 at 10:48 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of David Wade Underwood.*



May 03, 2024 at 09:47 AM

LD

“ I’m so grateful for his faithful friendship to my brother, Philip Ipema.

Loretta Duemler - May 03, 2024 at 08:19 AM

JS

“ David first coached me in little league baseball, prob around 1989-90, Matt and I then played football together at HU. David was always around and he and I were very good buddies. I lived in Ogallala Nebraska for a while, he would always reference Dee Boot, (Robert Duvall movie) 😊

We spoke from time to time on the phone, and he would always say “I’ll be praying about you moving back to Searcy.” Truly one of the sweetest and Godly men I have known. Will miss him very much. Wodees. ❤️

Jason Sneed - May 01, 2024 at 11:22 PM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of David Wade Underwood.



May 01, 2024 at 06:39 PM

RD

“ Robbie & Beth Davis purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of David Wade Underwood.



Robbie & Beth Davis - May 01, 2024 at 06:01 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of David Wade Underwood.



May 01, 2024 at 05:05 PM



“ I initially met David while in the elementary teacher education program at Harding in the late '70s. We had several classes together and since there weren't a multitude of males enrolled in this particular career path, David and I naturally gravitated together in hopes of making a difference in the lives of children. I found David easy going and a genuine people-person which naturally came in handy when David later joined the ranks of the Advancement Office at Harding.

In the 90s, we reconnected and became more than just acquaintances. He frequently called or emailed me not necessarily to contribute to Harding's mission, but to discuss my life or Harding football. More than once, he helped me with situations that were not in his job description, but nonetheless made an extra effort to assist me in a perceived urgent need.

The last time I saw him was early one morning last November around 7:00 as we walked into the Heritage Building. He greeted me warmly and took some time to show his respect for me. He was that kind of guy. I will sorely miss this Godly man.

Rod Dollins - May 01, 2024 at 04:48 PM

DF

“ When the Underwood kids moved in next door to us in Onicha Ngwa, we learned that, among other things, the Beatles had thrived since appearing on the Ed Sullivan show. When later Davy visited us in Dickson TN, we listened to an Apple vinyl single of Get Back. Now the tune is on my Spotify playlist, still a favorite. In Nigeria, Davy liked to organize sports events. I couldn't, even to same my life, handle a soccer ball with my feet. But I was OK observing the local plants and animals. Anyway, we had a lot of fun. As our separate adult lives developed we saw less of each other but the last time I saw Davy he mentioned how much he treasured those times in our childhoods. I grieve the passing so soon of a connection to a happy time but I hope his happiness while he was with us will be some consolation to those closest to him.

David Farrar - May 01, 2024 at 01:35 PM

DC

“ Davids' Favorite Gators (The Chandlers) planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Wade Underwood.

Davids' Favorite Gators (The Chandlers) - May 01, 2024 at 09:53 AM

DC

“ Davids' Favorite Gators (The Chandlers) purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of David Wade Underwood.



Davids' Favorite Gators (The Chandlers) - May 01, 2024 at 09:53 AM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of David Wade Underwood.*



May 01, 2024 at 09:51 AM



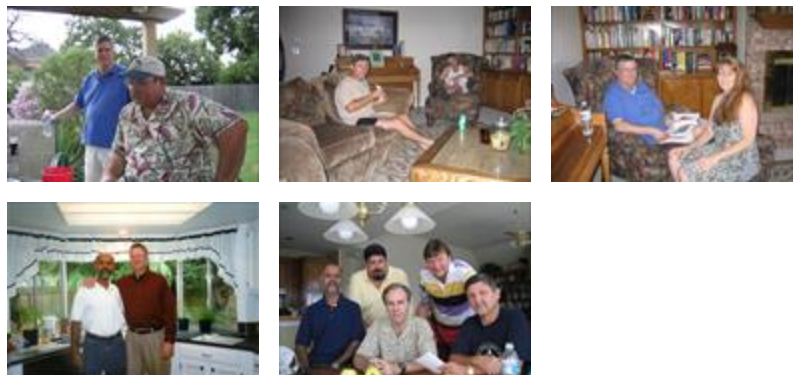
“ *From Nannette and Charles Roberts purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of David Wade Underwood.*



From Nannette and Charles Roberts - May 01, 2024 at 09:00 AM



“ *29 files added to the album David Underwood with his Liberian Family*



Grant Marquardt - May 01, 2024 at 12:08 AM

BF

“ Betty Ulrey and Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Wade Underwood.

Betty Ulrey and Family - April 30, 2024 at 06:18 PM



“ Rainbow Of Remembrance Spray was purchased for the family of David Wade Underwood.



April 30, 2024 at 06:18 PM

LW

“ Love, Mark and Kea Watson planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Wade Underwood.

Love, Mark and Kea Watson - April 30, 2024 at 04:36 PM

LW

“ Love, Mark and Kea Watson purchased the Your Light Shines for the family of David Wade Underwood.



Love, Mark and Kea Watson - April 30, 2024 at 04:36 PM

PM

“ *What a shock to lose someone like David! He was a dear friend, a constant source of encouragement. He was always ready to listen. He got me into blogging back in the day and started me on a path that has led to my current ministry. I thank God for him, for his life, and for the love that he had for his family.*

Patrick Mead - April 30, 2024 at 04:09 PM



“ *Ocean Breeze Spray was purchased for the family of David Wade Underwood.*



April 30, 2024 at 03:56 PM

MI

“ *Med Communications, Inc. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Wade Underwood.*

Med Communications, Inc. - April 30, 2024 at 03:56 PM

SK

“ *David was a consistent friend and encourager to my family. I have many happy memories of times spent with he and his family in Liberia. We honor his service and leadership, and know he made a significant impact on the Lord's kingdom. We offer heartfelt sympathy and prayers for Jan and the entire family. Love, Kevin, Susan, Brooke, Braden and Alex Kehl*

Susan Kehl - April 30, 2024 at 03:09 PM

TK

“ The Carr College of Nursing & Susan Kehl planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Wade Underwood.

The Carr College of Nursing & Susan Kehl - April 30, 2024 at 03:04 PM

TK

“ The Carr College of Nursing & Susan Kehl purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of David Wade Underwood.



The Carr College of Nursing & Susan Kehl - April 30, 2024 at 03:04 PM

AT

“ ARcare Clinical Pharmacy Team purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of David Wade Underwood.



ARcare Clinical Pharmacy Team - April 30, 2024 at 02:10 PM

BW

“ Peace and comfort to the entire Underwood family as we mourn the loss of our dear friend David! I can't help but think about the many times back over the years anytime we would make a gift to Harding no matter how small, we always received a handwritten card from David that ended with these words "We love you guys!" I know there are thousands of others who could say the same thing! What a good, kind, caring, gentle man! We love you brother and we will miss you! Bob Watson

Bob Watson - April 30, 2024 at 01:27 PM

KB

“ My friend; rest in peace. For the many hours spent picking at the guitar, the musings of sporting events, the sitting in silent revelation; I commit our time to precious memory. Always friendly, always genuine, never shirked a duty; in honor I'm playing one of our favorites from Jackson Browne . . " For a Dancer". Thank you for your seeds; I'll see you soon enough. kkb

Klay Knox Bartee - April 30, 2024 at 11:06 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of David Wade Underwood.



April 30, 2024 at 09:50 AM

TF

“ The Pillay Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Wade Underwood.

The Pillay Family - April 30, 2024 at 09:50 AM

LH

“ I am so sorry to hear this. My love and prayers are with you all. I will let Daniel know.

LaDonna Hembree - April 30, 2024 at 07:39 AM

RT

“ I am so very sorry for the loss of your beloved David. My prayers are with you.

Rhonda Dugger Thomas

Rhonda Dugger Thomas - April 30, 2024 at 02:30 AM

DR

“ Our hearts are broken to hear this news. We have known Dave since he was a child and spent time with him in Liberia. It has been with great joy that we saw him grow into a wonderful, loving, godly man. I will never forget his steadfast kindness and loving ways. All my love and condolences to you Jan, and to the boys and the whole family and host of friends who will miss him. He has left a huge hole in this world.

Dorlea Rikard

Dorlea Rikard - April 29, 2024 at 11:35 PM

GS

“ Pam and I have counted David and Jan as dear friends and family in Christ for many years. Being in Sunday night group together during our time in Searcy was such a blessing!! Jan and Family, our love and care are with you!! Gary & Pam Stephenson (Phil. 3:20,21)

Gary Stephenson - April 29, 2024 at 10:31 PM

DP

“ Sweet, sweet Mrs Jan, I am so heartbroken for you and your family. I have said several prayers for you all since I heard the news and will continue to do so for some time as I know it will difficult for many days to come.

Deanna Prince - April 29, 2024 at 09:33 PM

SB

“ *During this time of loss, thinking of you even more... Sending love and prayers for all...*

Sharon M Boshell - April 29, 2024 at 09:26 PM

JG

“ *Jan I am so sorry for the loss of such a kind caring man. I still think of all the great times we all had at Harding. They are memories that have lasted all these years and will continue to make me smile. Love you guys and sure wish I could be there. I bet Dad and Mom are over the moon that they are getting to share heaven with Dave.*

Jill Jones Goldsberry - April 29, 2024 at 08:24 PM