



Darrell Ray Norman

September 14, 1939 - November 29, 2022

Darrell Ray Norman, age 83, of Fort Payne passed away, November 29, 2022. He was born Sept. 14, 1939 in the coal mining town of Trafford in rural Jefferson County to the late Raymond and Maybelle Norman.

He was a graduate of Warrior High School, then joined the U.S. Air Force and became fluent in Russian after intensive study at Syracuse University in New York and a tour in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. He served during the Cold War era and retired after 21 years of service as a Senior Master Sergeant, which is among the top three enlisted ranks in the Air Force. After retirement, he became a member of the Prop Wash Gang, an airborne component of a larger group known as a Silent Warriors.

After military service he lived on a small farm before a new career in journalism. He graduated from the University of Alabama at Huntsville, where he also later taught remedial English.

As an award-winning journalist, he worked at the Huntsville Times and Times Journal in Fort Payne, and retired from The Gadsden Times, where he worked as a reporter and columnist. He also wrote a book, "Have Another Cup," a compilation of his work at The Gadsden Times. He loved sharing stories of his adventures, from the coal mining camp in Alabama to the Alcan Highway at 45 degrees below zero and Boris Pasternak's grave in Russia. He shared

stories of his vintage VW bus, he lovingly named Valentina and used on many antiquing road trips.

As an avid reader, E.B. White was his favorite author, along with Ernie Pyle, Joan Didion, William Faulkner and Earnest Hemingway.

Norman loved to learn new things and took up woodworking after retirement. He was a lifetime learner and there's nothing more he enjoyed than encouraging others — from telling to his young daughter, Amber, who wanted to be a stewardess that she could pilot the plane, to guiding coworkers who sought his advice in the written word.

In one of Norman's most beloved columns, he explains his lack of the fan gene when it comes to choosing Alabama or Auburn. Using his amusing storytelling skills, he explained that he had no interest in the sports of either university. However, just last week, he declared a favorite in the Iron Bowl. His grandson, Alex, kicked for the Auburn Tigers.

A memorial visitation is planned for Friday, Dec. 2 from 5-7 p.m. at Wilson Funeral Home in Fort Payne.

He is survived by his beloved daughter Amber McPherson (LaDon); grandsons Logan (Madison), Evan (Gracie), and Alex McPherson; great-grandson Brooks. He is also survived by his wife, Brenda, brother Jack Norman (Sue); and nephew Bryan Norman (Penny).

Wilson Funeral Home and Crematory of Fort Payne is in charge of arrangements.

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

DEC 2. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Wilson Funeral Home
3801 Gault Ave. N
Fort Payne, AL 35967

Tribute Wall



“ I served with Darrell at a remote AF listening post on the Black Sea Coast in the early 1960s. Interesting guy with many talents. Rest well - I've got the watch!

Ronald Ostrom - October 30, 2025 at 08:43 PM



“ Darrell Ray Norman

January 12, 2023 at 10:45 AM



“ Glenda Roden lit a candle in memory of Darrell Norman



Glenda Roden - December 02, 2022 at 08:28 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Darrell Ray Norman.



December 01, 2022 at 08:00 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Darrell Ray Norman.



December 01, 2022 at 06:19 PM



“ *Jack, Sue, Penny, Bryan Norman* purchased the *Arrive in Style* for the family of Darrell Ray Norman.



Jack, Sue, Penny, Bryan Norman - December 01, 2022 at 03:35 PM