



## Donald Edward Wheeler

March 11, 1936 - May 28, 2024

Donald Edward Wheeler, 88, of Gainesville, VA, passed away peacefully at home on March 28, 2024.

Don leaves behind his wife of 67 years, Betty, as well as his daughter, Beth Hodge (Wayne)

of Greensboro NC. His son, Mitch, we are certain helped welcome him into heaven, having

preceded him in death by 9 years. He is also survived by his brother, Bernie Wheeler

(Cindy), and sister, Helen Phillips (Carl). Don will be greatly missed by 5 grandchildren, 3

great-grandchildren and one small but devoted black dog.

Don's hometown was Dayton OH, graduating from the University of Dayton in 1957 and

serving in the National Guard. A man of many talents, Don worked making and restoring

furniture, managing a print shop, owning a donut shop and a construction business, and

worked for NADA for many years. He continued making furniture long after retirement;

many relatives and friends treasure pieces he crafted in his woodworking shop that bear

his "DEW" initials.

Having grown up during WWII, Don believed in repairing instead of replacing, and could fix

just about anything. Don loved anything with a motor, but particularly cars, which he

would discuss with anyone who showed an interest. He was a master storyteller, from

describing how he met Orville Wright as a boy, to listing the more than 70 cars he owned

over the years. He was a voracious reader and expert crossword puzzler. He belonged to

the Ruritan, and was a long-time member of the Little River Baptist Church.

A memorial service will be held on June 16, 2024, 3:00 p.m., at Little River Baptist Church,

40385 Braddock Rd, Aldie, VA. In lieu of flowers, donations to Shepherd Center

Foundation, 2020 Peachtree Road NW Atlanta, GA 30309 (or online at [foundation.shepherd.org](http://foundation.shepherd.org)) are welcome.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JUN 16. 3:00 PM (ET)

Little River Baptist Church  
40385 Braddock Road  
Aldie, VA

# Tribute Wall

PH

“ Sorry to read about Don but it happens to all of us sooner or later. Don and I lived on Victor Ave in Dayton for many years and had a lot of good times.

Paul (Bud) Hensley - April 14 at 05:07 PM

PH

“ This is Paul (Bud) Hensley - Don and I grew up on Victor Ave, Dayton Ohio in the 1940's and 50's. Had many good times together. Met with Don and Betty a time or two in Virginia.

Paul (Bud) Hensley - November 22, 2024 at 10:45 AM

WF

“ When I first met my husband, several friends came along with the deal. One was his long time chum, Don Wheeler. They shared many mutual passions....antique furniture, everything in the printing industry, auto restoration, car shows, auto racing, auto stories, new cars, vintage cars, antique cars, and the stories behind every car they owned and every car they wished they owned. We so admired Don's woodworking skills. I love the furniture Don restored and the pieces he made for us. Ted truly cherished his long time friendship with Don. If I know Ted, he probably met Don on the other side with Don's favorite antique car. I will always remember the times we shared with Don. Rest in Peace my friend. You will be missed.



Wendy Fike - June 15, 2024 at 04:16 PM

DW

“ I'll never forget Uncle Don.  
His cool phone booth in the rec room.  
Riding his motorcycle  
Tripping out and damaging certain body parts on his ATV  
Eating Chinese food at Christmas time- felt like the Movie....  
Learning how to drink a good whiskey  
Learning how to smoke a pipe  
Helping in the wood shop  
How NOT to treat a car  
How to talk politics and always win even when no one could understand you  
Who the enemy is  
Who the good guys are  
How to find the value of my car  
How to drive a car really fast  
When it was time to get up from the chair

*Thanks Uncle Don for all of your life lessons...and especially stories about Grandpa and Grandma in Dayton. Never forgotten.*

*David*

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**David Wheeler** - June 07, 2024 at 03:42 PM

“ When I was a kid I thought Don was what was referred then as "Super-Cool". He was 12 years older and he did Super-Cool things. He drove neat cars; e.g., Karman Ghia, and did neat things; e.g., flew sail planes; married a BEAUTIFUL woman; went to Acapulco, etc. etc.

*In our adult years he was just an source of aggravation because he could do things with his hands that I couldn't pretend to do. And I was reminded of it every three years at the Wheeler Family Reunion. He was a skilled wood worker and I was fortunate enough to win or out-bid someone else, I forget which, a hallway mantel that is just inside the door to our house. It holds hats, keys, pocket knives, trinkets of all kinds, and then just stuff. I can't find anything on it now because it is so full.*

*And, as all the family knows, he should have been reported to the ASPCA around 12-13 years ago. He actually took his pistol out of the holster and blew the brains out of a possum that had the audacity to appear on the rim of his bathtub inside the house. To eliminate that problem, he eliminated that possum with one accurate shot and that poor creature lay deader than the proverbial door nail in the bottom of the tub. I will admit, his telling that story at the reunion in Dayton created a mental picture that has never left my mind. Carl and Cory even wrote a song commemorating that poor dead possum.*

*From what I gathered he was lucky enough to combine his two greatest interests -- cars and printing. If I am accurate, he wound up printing the NADA monthly book on the current value of cars.*

*And he was a great conversationalist. That was particularly true when discussing life in the 40's when he was a kid; his familiarity with Jonathan Winters who was also from Dayton; what he knew about the Wright Bros. and Mr. Kettering. I always enjoyed listening to his accounts of those people and events of that era.*

*We mourn the senior member of the grandchildren of Donnie and Grace Wheeler. Starting in 1993, we have held family reunions every three years but for the Covid year, 2020. We have a good time together. Always have. We will meet again in 2026. And DON EDDIE will be missed then just as much as he is now.*

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**Rob Wheeler** - June 06, 2024 at 04:04 PM



“ *So many memories to share over the years. Some of my favorites are spending time in Don's work shop building furniture together. If my count is accurate, I think we have eight pieces. Spending time on the farm was always a fun family event complete with horse and ATV rides. But nothing can top the possum story. I wasn't there but listening to Don tell the story will be etched in my memory until my last breath. I love sharing that story and thinking about Don. Memories bring back you!*

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**Carl Phillips** - June 06, 2024 at 02:59 PM