



# Van William Funderburk

APR 4, 1933 - APR 3, 2026



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# Van William Funderburk

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**V**an W. Funderburk, 92, of Dellrose, TN, passed away peacefully at home on April 3, 2026, in the loving care of his family and hospice—just one day shy of his 93rd birthday. He was born on April 4, 1933, in Pineville, Louisiana, to Arthur and Era Funderburk. As the son of a Baptist minister, Van’s childhood was marked by frequent moves across Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas. He learned to play the piano from his mother, the church pianist, which sparked his lifelong love of music. In his early years he followed in his parents’ footsteps, serving as a youth and music minister. He earned his Bachelor’s degree from Baylor University and continued his higher education, earning a Master’s degree and making substantial progress toward a doctoral program, which led to a long and fulfilling career as a psychologist.

At the age of 13 Van was diagnosed with type 1 juvenile diabetes. In that era, doctors held limited hope for a long life, yet he defied the odds and lived a vibrant, active life for nearly 80 more years.

Van is survived by his wife, Carol; his children from his blended family, Jeff and his wife Laura, Carol and her husband Todd, Rachel and her husband Senter, and Michael and his wife Kelly; his grandchildren: Andy, Sam, Camren, Dixon, Nicolas, Jackson, and Logan; his sister Elaine and her children and grandchildren; and his brother-in-law Earl Carlile.

Van enjoyed sailing and woodworking. As a retirement project he combined those two passions and hand-built a wooden sailboat. He maintained a lifelong passion for classical music and was affectionately known as the “BRAVO man” for being the loudest to shout “Bravo!” at the end of each performance. He loved to cook and took great joy in sharing wonderful meals and gatherings with family and friends. He cherished his many close friendships, many of which became like family, especially the more than 40-year bond he and Carol shared with their best friends Frank and Marty.



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Above all, Van was known for his fiercely independent spirit. A true rebel who lived by the motto “you can’t tell me what to do.” He cussed like a sailor, measured once and cut two (or three) times, and was predictably unpredictable. Van’s ‘other side’ was equally endearing — he also had a deeply sweet and sensitive soul. He was easily moved to tears by tender moments, including even short commercials. His good humor, spontaneous nature, and sweet personality left a lasting impression on everyone who knew him.

The family is opting for privacy and will hold a private celebration of his life



## Tribute Wall

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**Donna Paolini** posted:

So sorry to read of Van's passing. Mom thought he was the best! What a great guy.donna dixon paolini

April 10 at 9:27 PM



**Donna Paolini** posted:

So sorry to read of Van's passing. I remember all the wonderful times we spent with both Van and Carol when we lived in Pembroke with Mom. She thought he was the bestdonna dixon paolini

April 10 at 9:25 PM



# **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Van by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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