



Denny T. Wolfe Jr.

November 11, 2025

Dr. Denny Thruston Wolfe, Jr., passed away on Tuesday, November 11, 2025. He was the only child of Denny Thruston and Carmen Haynes Wolfe; he was born in Marion, Virginia. Growing up in the southwest corner of Virginia, he often threatened to write the story of his youth, calling it “Growing Up Appalachia.” The book was never written, but it was always there in his active mind. Denny Thruston Wolfe, Jr., never forgot where he came from.

After graduating from high school, he attended Lees-McRae College, where his basketball skills flourished. Upon completing his studies, he transferred to Appalachian State University, where he graduated in 1965 with a bachelor’s degree in English and English Education. From 1966 to 1979, he worked in the North Carolina schools, including his alma mater, Lees-McCrae, and earned an M.A. at Appalachian State and a Ph.D. at Duke University. In 1974, he became the state director for the Division of Languages. Of course, Denny was an avid Duke basketball fan and loved his Blue Devils.

In 1979, he was appointed professor of English Education at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, where he served in varied and increasingly responsible positions for the next 23 years. His many achievements included training countless teachers, authoring more than 80 publications, writing four books, leading the Tidewater Writing Project, and serving as a principal investigator on grants.

Throughout the College of Education, he was respected and appreciated for his even temper, sense of humor, openness to new ideas, and willingness to assist his colleagues. In 2002, Denny Wolfe left ODU for a well-deserved retirement. He leaves behind a legacy of enduring academic achievement and loyal service to Old Dominion University.

Denny is survived by Catherine, his loving and devoted wife of 28 years; his son, Cary Wolfe; his daughter, Ashley Long, and her husband, John; and his two grandchildren, Riley Long and Owen Long.

A Funeral service will be held at 11 am, Friday, November 21, 2025, in Loving Funeral Home, followed by a gathering of friends at nearby East Side Ristorante, 5630 Portsmouth Blvd, Portsmouth.

Cemetery Details

Greenlawn Memorial Gardens

3920 Airline Blvd
Chesapeake, VA 23321

Previous Events

Funeral Service

NOV **21**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Loving Funeral Home Churchland Chapel
3225 Academy Ave
Portsmouth, VA 23703

Tribute Wall

R.

“ Ronald . planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Denny T. Wolfe Jr..

Ronald . - November 21, 2025 at 10:04 AM

“ Sweet Snacks Gift Crate was purchased for the family of Denny T. Wolfe Jr..



November 19, 2025 at 11:39 PM

JW

“ Denny was one of my great mentors. He encouraged me to enter the teaching profession, advised me to earn my MAT, and continued to support and assist me as I was a young teacher. He mentored me into directing a National Writing Project site when I became a professor. He included me on various publication projects. He was a great hearted person and a good friend. I hold him dear in my heart.

Jeffrey Wilhelm - November 19, 2025 at 10:59 PM

JD

“ Joanna and David purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Denny T. Wolfe Jr..



Joanna and David - November 19, 2025 at 01:33 PM

JD

“ Joanna and David planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Denny T. Wolfe Jr..

Joanna and David - November 19, 2025 at 01:33 PM

KK

“ Karen K. planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Denny T. Wolfe Jr..

Karen K. - November 19, 2025 at 10:40 AM



“ Rose Remembrance was purchased for the family of Denny T. Wolfe Jr..



November 19, 2025 at 10:10 AM

CA

“ Celia Alexander planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Denny T. Wolfe Jr..

Celia Alexander - November 19, 2025 at 10:10 AM

KA

“ Karen sent a virtual gift in memory of Denny T. Wolfe Jr.



Karen - November 17, 2025 at 09:55 AM

KA

Encouraging and teaching me to express myself through words was one of the greatest gifts that Denny could give to me. I will continue to share his enthusiasm through my own writing.

Karen - November 17, 2025 at 10:00 AM

JD

I cannot tell you how often I still quote some pearl of wisdom Denny dropped on me during my years at the Tidewater Writing Project. He was a major influence on me as a teacher, and his approach to teaching teachers continues to inspire me in my current work in professional development. I am grateful to him for all he taught me about education, and I am equally grateful for the kindness, warmth, and humor he displayed on a daily basis. He will be missed.

J. D Degnan - November 20, 2025 at 09:18 AM