



David Everette Setzer

October 7, 1934 - August 4, 2020

David Everette Setzer, 85, entered into eternal life on Aug. 4, 2020.

Born Oct. 7, 1934, he was the son of the late Everette L. and Era Love Setzer. A native of New London, he graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a degree in radio and television, and spent four years in the Air Force. He served in the Public Information section at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, Nebraska, and also deployed to Saudi Arabia.

Returning home in 1961, he went by The Salisbury Post to visit then editor George Raynor, who promised to make some inquiries for him. Eventually Raynor told him, "Go out to Catawba to see Dr. A.R. Keppel."

Keppel, who was college president, hired Setzer two days later, and Setzer spent the next 36 years at the college working in public relations. He served under six different presidents.

During his tenure, he served as director of public relations, acting director of development, supervisor of buildings and grounds and housekeeping, executive assistant to the president and vice president for communications.

He met his future wife, Barbara Anne Grimmie, on his first day on campus. She was a senior, and they figured they'd get in trouble for dating. They didn't.

Shortly after Barbara's graduation, they were married in July 21, 1962, on the bride's front lawn in Berlin, N.J., by the mayor. They had two children, Dana Setzer Curry and Mark David Setzer, both of Salisbury. Setzer is also survived by a son-in-law, Eugene "Buddy" Curry.

At Catawba, in addition to receiving numerous graphic arts awards, he received the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award, the Trustee Award, and the Fisher Service Award. The students dedicated the yearbook to him in 1970. In 2012, Setzer was honored with the David E. Setzer Endowed Scholarship for students majoring in English with a writing concentration.

In 1979, Setzer and his father, an experienced carver, donated a totem pole to Catawba's Shuford Stadium before the season opener football game against Liberty Baptist. It still stands today.

When Setzer was ready to retire from Catawba in 1997, then President Fred Corriher, a member of the newly formed Blanche & Julian Robertson Family Foundation, asked him to apply to be its first executive director.

"I knew he was very talented and very detail oriented," Corriher said. "I thought he was perfect for the job."

"There could not have been a better person at a better time," said Margaret Kluttz, past president of the Robertson Foundation following a long tenure by the late Jim Hurley. "He was at the heart of the foundation. He understood and appreciated local non-profit organizations, those people who are working in the trenches. He's been a champion for the community, there's no question about it."

During his tenure with the foundation, Setzer, with Dave Jordan, served as co-chairman for the \$5.5 million expansion of Rowan Helping Ministries.

Setzer had met Julian Robertson — who gave \$15 million to start the foundation — through Catawba College’s business symposiums, and was impressed. And he’d known Robertson’s parents, Julian and Blanche Robertson, through St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, where the Setzers are longtime members. At St. Luke’s, Setzer was a senior warden of the vestry, Every Member Canvass chairman, lay reader, and chalice bearer.

Robertson gave the board free rein in going about its business over the years.

“Keep doing what you’re doing,” he’d often tell them. “You’re doing great!”

And it wasn’t unusual for Setzer to get handwritten checks in the mail from Robertson — for \$1 million or for \$5 million or for \$7 million. It was always a thrill.

“David has been key in making the foundation so successful,” Robertson said when Setzer retired from the foundation. “I have always been confident in the people who serve on the board of the foundation, and it is they who found David. He has been such a shining star. We will miss him greatly and wish him all the best in the years ahead.”

When Setzer retired a second time, he was given the key to the city.

In the community, Setzer served the United Way, Heart Fund, Salisbury-Rowan Chamber of Commerce, National Sportscasters & Sportswriters Association, Historic Salisbury Foundation (trustee), and Waterworks Visual Arts Center.

Setzer absolutely loved Superman, and he and his daughter often joked that

he looked a lot like Clark Kent. His daughter found a quote by Superman actor Christopher Reeve that her dad saved: "A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles."

"I can say with assurance that Dad is and was my hero in life," his daughter said. "He shared his strength with me to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles."

Due to Covid-19 private services will be held.

Memorials may be made to St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 131 W. Council St., Salisbury, NC 28144, or to Catawba College, 2300 W. Innes St., Salisbury, NC 28144.

Summersett Funeral Home is serving the Setzer family. Online condolences may be made at www.summersettfuneralhome.com.

Tribute Wall

DH

“ *Barbara,
I am so sorry for the loss of David. In his quiet yet fun way he helped the community of Salisbury achieve so much! I know he will be a great loss to you and the family, but he will be an equal loss to all the rest of us! I hope you are doing as well as possible in his absence!*
David Hagy

David Hagy - September 25, 2020 at 03:22 AM

BS

“ *My memories of David are part of the gifts of my life. His contributions to Catawba are countless, but what I remember most is David's character. He was forever a source of insight, of humor, and most of all, of compassion. Being in David's presence always made me glad to be alive. My prayers for comfort are for you who were closest to him, but my celebration is for all of us who were so very blessed to know him.*

Barry Sang, Chair, Religion & Philosophy Dept. Catawba College

Barry R. Sang - August 08, 2020 at 11:11 AM



“ *Summer's Light Bouquet was purchased for the family of David Everette Setzer.*



August 07, 2020 at 09:14 AM

AH

“ Barbara,
I was fortunate to get to work with and know David when I worked at Catawba. He was such a southern gentleman in every way. I will always remember he helped me design and printed the bulletins for my wedding in June of 1980. He will be missed by all who knew him. May our Lord and Savior give you the comfort, strength, and peace you need to face the difficult days ahead!! You are in my prayers!!

God Blesz,

Ann Toney Heard

Marion, NC. formerly of Salisbury, NC

Ann Toney Heard - August 06, 2020 at 07:19 PM

BB

“ Barbara,

I am so sorry to hear about David. He was a real gentleman who will be missed by all who knew him. He was a true asset to the community. It was a joy to have worked with him at Catawba. You, Dana, Mark, and all the family are in my thoughts and prayers. Cherish the precious memories...that does help.

Love and prayers,

Bo Butler

Bo Butler - August 06, 2020 at 09:48 AM

BL

“ Dear “Cousin” Barbara,

I so enjoyed every minute I spent with David. His warmth and gentle humor came through in those little twinkles in his eyes. You both always made me feel so welcomed in Salisbury and you inspired me to be part of the community. Will miss David dearly and hope that many fond memories will be of some comfort during this most difficult time.

*Big hugs,
Brien Lewis*

Brien Lewis - August 06, 2020 at 06:51 AM

CW

“ So deeply saddened to hear of David's passing. I spent much time with his Dad Everette and David's children Dana and Mark.as they visited their grandparents on the weekends. Got to know David and Barbara during this time. I had the same respect for David as I did his Dad. Everette told me many times as we worked on a project how proud he was of his son and his family. He will be missed as profoundly as his parents. An outstanding individual. I shall miss him. Charlie Walters & family.

Charlie Walters - August 05, 2020 at 09:01 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of David Everette Setzer.



August 05, 2020 at 08:51 PM

BG

“ *Sending prayers and hugs.*



Barbara Arrigo Grimmie - August 05, 2020 at 08:30 PM

JW

“ *A gentleman in every sense of the word. David made Salisbury a better place and I am sorry for your loss... Jay Whittington*

Jay Whittington - August 05, 2020 at 08:15 PM

DD

“ *A true gentleman in every sense of the word ... David was my work supervisor for six years, but became more than a boss. My father had died young and when I needed a best man for my wedding in 1988, David graciously accepted the invitation. He taught me many things, personally and professionally -- some of which I still use today. I could tell that he took pride in my successes and memories of our work days and lunches fill me with warmth. Condolences to Barbara, Dana and Mark, on the loss of such a wonderful man. ---Dennis Davidson*

Dennis Davidson - August 05, 2020 at 05:00 PM