



## F. Rivers Lawther Jr.

May 7, 2024

F. Rivers Lawther, Jr. of Salisbury, North Carolina, passed away peacefully on May 7, 2024, at the age of 81. Rivers was born in Charleston, South Carolina to Dr. and Mrs. Francis “Slick” Rivers Lawther, Sr., Major USAF, moving to Wilmington after his father’s death during World War II. Rivers was also preceded in death by his mother, Mrs. Katharine Martin Lawther, and brother, David.

After graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1964, Rivers answered the call to serve his country by joining the United States Air Force. He served for five years during the Vietnam War, and rose to the rank of Captain. Upon completion of his military service, he pursued his passion for law and graduated from the University of North Carolina School of Law in June of 1972.

Rivers joined the law firm of Woodson, Sayers, Lawther, Short, Parrott, and Abramson, LLP in September of 1972, where he worked in various roles until his passing. He used his brilliant legal mind to assist numerous clients in Salisbury throughout his practice. Rivers also served as the Salisbury City Attorney, the Town Attorney for Spencer, and president of the Rowan County Bar Association.

As the Salisbury City Attorney for 33 years, Rivers assisted in many planning

and development decisions for the city, including the arrival of the internet and numerous downtown renovation plans. Upon his retirement from that position in July of 2018, he was presented with the Key to the City. Additionally, he served in numerous community leadership roles, including: president of the Salisbury-Rowan Symphony, member of the Board of Directors of Rowan County Hospice, and member of the Board of Directors of the Country Club of Salisbury. He also served in his faith community; as a Junior Warden at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Proctor Foundation.

In his leisure time, Rivers found joy on the golf course, where he indulged his passion for the game with enthusiasm and skill. He will be remembered fondly by all who had the privilege of knowing him. His kindness, integrity, and unwavering commitment to his family and community leaves a legacy that will continue to inspire for generations to come.

He will be deeply missed by his beloved wife, Barbara Martin Lawther, son John (Deanne), daughter Katharine Concelman (John), four grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

A private interment with military honors will be held at the National Cemetery Annex in Salisbury.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Faithful Friends or Rowan Helping Ministries; both can be made through Friends of Rowan, PO Box 262, Salisbury, NC 28145-0262 (by making the donations through Friends of Rowan they will be doubled – please place the organizations name on the memo line of the check).

Summersett Funeral Home is serving the Lawther family. Online condolences may be made at [www.summersettfuneralhome.com](http://www.summersettfuneralhome.com).



# Tribute Wall

ML

“ I have known Rivers and Barbara for many years. Having worked with Rivers, I can say there was no one more polite, respectful, or kind. He was one of a kind. Barbara, you are in my prayers.  
*Mary Lou Lipscomb*

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**Mary Lou Lipscomb** - May 16, 2024 at 03:55 PM

DB

“ Family, I am so sorry for your loss. I knew Rivers in law school and since I lived in Statesville and practiced law there, I referred Rowan County real estate cases to Rivers, because I knew my clients would be in good hands with Rivers' help. He was a very good lawyer and an even better man.

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**David Benbow** - May 14, 2024 at 08:42 PM

KE

“ To Barbara and the rest of the Lawther Family. I was saddened to read of Rivers' passing today in the In Memoriam section of the North Carolina Bar Association weekly email. I greatly respected his legal acumen and I agree wholeheartedly with the reference in his obituary to his kindness and integrity. He was a valued member of the Salisbury community and will be fondly remembered for years to come. *Ken Eagle*

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**Ken Eagle** - May 14, 2024 at 05:15 PM

GL

“ *To Rivers Family,  
I am so very sorry for your loss! He was such a good man who always had a smile and a kind word. I worked with John Holshouser & Bill Kenerly for 19 years, and that is how I became acquainted with Rivers. I will be praying for your family in the days ahead that God will mend your broken hearts.*  
Gaynell Lambert

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**Gaynell Lambert** - May 14, 2024 at 04:58 PM

ME

“ *Our deepest sympathy for Barbara and the family. Rivers was such a wonderful person. We were so lucky to have known him. So sorry for your loss. He will be remembered with such fondness. Sending thoughts & prayers, Meredith & Paul Sullivan*

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**Meredith** - May 14, 2024 at 12:51 PM

MR

“ *Sending deepest sympathy ,prayers, and love to Barbara and Family! Marcia and Randy Reamer*

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**Marcia Reamer** - May 14, 2024 at 12:28 PM

MH

“ *Sending condolences to the Lawther family. I worked for him for 9 years and I truly enjoyed working with him. He was kind and patient and great to be around. He will be missed. Prayers to the family*

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**Melinda Hartman** - May 14, 2024 at 08:26 AM

MB

“ *I’m saddened to read that Rivers has passed away. He was gave us guidance on many issues on City Council, always in a quiet and unassuming way. Outside of Council, he always had a ready smile and a good story. He was most of all, a good man.*

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**Maggie Blackwell** - May 14, 2024 at 06:31 AM