



Donald James Williams

September 13, 1933 - November 17, 2025

Donald J. Williams, 92, of Ocala, Florida passed away peacefully at his home on November 17, 2025. Born on September 13, 1933, he lived a long and remarkable life defined by dedication, curiosity, and an unmistakable passion for the things he loved.

In his early years, Donald proudly served in the United States Air Force. He was honorably discharged in 1957. After completing his service, he went on to work for AT&T, where he spent many years building a stable and meaningful career. His work ethic, reliability, and technical skill made him a valued part of the company and helped lay the foundation for the rest of his life's endeavors.

Outside of his professional career, Donald became a beloved and influential figure in the world of pedigreed cats. He was an active, and honored judge for the Cat Fanciers' Association (CFA) for many years and played a significant role in shaping the organization itself. Donald also served as CFA president for over 14 years and was a co-founder of both the Cat Fanciers' Foundation and the Feline Historical Museum in Alliance, Ohio—institutions dedicated to preserving the history and future of the hobby he cared for so deeply. He was the acting president of the foundation until the day of his passing.

He was a successful breeder of Persians, Exotic shorthairs, Abyssinians, and Singapura cats for many years. His passion for cats took him across the

world, judging shows in nearly every country and sharing his expertise, fairness, and charm with countless exhibitors and fellow judges. He recently received an award from the CFA for 60 years of judging with the organization. Beyond the cat world, Donald loved cars, horses, and staying active—so much so that he continued working every day until his passing.

Donald was preceded in death by his parents, William and Elizabeth (McAndrews) Williams, his wife of many years Leta Williams, and his brother, Robert T. Williams. He leaves behind a large and loving family: his eight children—David Williams, Diane Williams (Butch), Donna Rohrer (John), Debbie Manning, Deana Williams, Desiree Williams (Ken Flak), Dale Williams (Robin Deeter), and Daniel Williams (Idessa)—as well as many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren who will carry his stories, warmth, and spirit forward.

Donald's life was one lived fully—marked by service, passion, and a lifelong commitment to the communities he helped build. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

A Celebration of Life Memorial Service will be held at a later date.

Tribute Wall

ML

“ Don will be missed enormously by so many in CFA. What a talented, funny, kind and patient man. It was an honor to have had you handle so many of my cats over the years.

Best wishes to the family,

Michele Lukic

MICHELE LUKIC - November 24, 2025 at 03:55 PM

LJ

“ I met him when I first started showing. He was patient, informative, and kind. Many is the time I went to dinner with him and Stan Barnaby, or they dined with us. A shining light in CFA, and a great promoter for the cat fancy.

Linda Jewell - November 23, 2025 at 08:29 PM

TS

“ I was just a little girl when my mom started showing Persians. I have fond memories of Don judging at the shows. He was a very kind, funny, and gentle soul.
Our deepest condolences to his family. He will be missed immensely.



Tammy Swan-Edwards - November 22, 2025 at 10:32 PM

JZ

“ I met Don Williams at the first show I ever attended in 1977. I actually got to know he and Leta the following year and, over the years, became good friends. Don taught me so much about handling our different breeds. But one of my fondest memories was at any show he and Leta judged together, you'd hear Leta yell "hey Donald" and you know she'd found something special (often a human infant) she wanted him to see. Fly free, Don, Leta is calling you home.

Jeri Zottoli - November 22, 2025 at 12:27 PM

LK

“ A CFA legend and a cowboy until the end. We will miss him immensely in the cat fancy and our condolences to his family.

Lyn Knight - November 22, 2025 at 08:26 AM

DW

“ So sorry for your loss and the loss to all of us who knew him well in CFA. We will miss him!....Donna Wilbanks

Donna Wilbanks - November 21, 2025 at 07:21 PM

BI

Deep condolences to Don's immediate family. We, in CFA mourn and share your loss. Bobbi Irie

Bobbi Irie - November 21, 2025 at 10:10 PM