



Wayne T Dilts

February 23, 1952 - February 23, 2026

Wayne T. Dilts, 74, of Ocala, Florida, departed from this world on February 23rd, 2026.

Born in 1952 in Flemington, New Jersey, Wayne was the youngest son of Leavitt (“Lefty”) and Muriel Dilts, with older brothers Richard and Robert. He was raised in Hunterdon County, where he became a lifelong thespian, author, educator, and learner. He graduated from Hunterdon Central High School in the class of 1970, and later received a Bachelor’s degree in Theater (Trenton State) followed by Masters’ degrees in English (Trenton State) and Educational Administration (Rutgers).

Wayne’s theater career began with his first high school production in 1967, sparking a love of performing that endured throughout his lifetime. He enjoyed all of his roles, whether on or off the stage, including as a director, playwright, acting coach, stage manager, props manager, and light board operator. While his capabilities were as far-ranging as his talent, his light shone brightest as an actor. Some of his proudest acting credits included Sam Adams and Hugh Taylor in *The Common Glory*, Harold Arlen in *Coming Back Like a Song*, John “Trapper” McIntyre in *M*A*S*H*, Maurice in *Beauty and the Beast*, Gus/Bustopher Jones in *CATS*, Michael in *Boys in the Band*, and Gildenstern in *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead*. These roles are just the highlights of a 60-year career in which he joyfully counted over 115 opening nights.

In 1987, Wayne began teaching at Bayley Ellard High School, and quickly

developed into a dedicated educator with a passion for bringing literary works to life for his students. He spent the majority of his teaching career at Butler High School, where he inspired thousands of students to think critically, seek deeper meaning, and cultivate their talents inside the classroom and beyond. He was exceptionally proud of all his former students, and truly enjoyed receiving updates and sharing in their successes later in life.

Wayne was also an accomplished author and playwright, with publications including "Thoreauviana", "Time's Best Jewel", a stage adaptation of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter", and numerous articles written for the Hunterdon Democrat, the Apgar Association, and the Thoreau Society. He was the editor for "Just the Way It Was" and "Rambling with Tom", the memoirs of Thomas Gilrane's upbringing in rural Ireland and immigration to the United States.

Of all the roles Wayne played in his life, his favorite by far was being a father to his two daughters. He loved them tremendously, and never missed an opportunity to share and celebrate their latest accomplishments.

Wayne is survived by his daughters, Katie and Kelsey, their mother, Lorrie, his brothers, Richard and Robert, and his extended family including numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews. He will be missed by all who knew him, and will be remembered fondly for his kind heart, sharp wit, encouraging nature, and unmistakable humor.

Memorial services will be held in both Ocala, Florida and Whitehouse, New Jersey as follows:

Florida - Saturday April 4th, 5:00 pm, at the Ocala Civic Theater, 4337 East Silver Springs Boulevard Ocala, FL 34470.

New Jersey - Visitation on Friday, April 10th, from 6:00 - 9:00 pm, with Funeral services on Saturday April 11th, 10:00 am at the Whitehouse Methodist Church, 73 Old Highway 28, Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Wayne's name to the Ocala Civic Theater, or the Thoreau Society.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR 4. 5:00 PM (ET)

Ocala Civic Theater
4337 East Silver Springs Boulevard
Ocala, FL 34470

Visitation

APR 10. 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Whitehouse Methodist Church
73 Old Highway 28
Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889

Memorial Service

APR 11. 10:00 AM (ET)

Whitehouse Methodist Church
73 Old Highway 28
Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889