



Wayne E. Deel

October 15, 1946 - May 20, 2026

Wayne E. Deel passed on May 20, 2026, after health issues and a recent hospitalization. He was 79.

Wayne was born on October 15, 1946, to Jacob and Grace Beatrice Deel in Roanoke, Virginia, the second of four children. Wayne lived in Roanoke for more than fifty years and enjoyed great success as an award-winning photojournalist for 42 years for the Roanoke Times (previously the Roanoke World-News) starting in high school in 1964 as a part-time darkroom assistant and moving up to staff photographer and then the photo assignment editor position. During his tenure with the paper, Wayne contributed to the coverage of the 1989-1990 Pittston Coal strike, which was a Pulitzer Prize finalist, won the Virginia Associated Press LaserPhoto of the year in 1990, and in 1985 covered the flood in Mason Creek in Salem, VA. His photo of the rescue of a woman from the floodwaters won the Associated Press Photo of the Year. That same year he received an additional Associated Press LaserPhoto of the Year with his photo of Virginia football coach George Welsh at the Georgia Tech vs. Virginia football game. In 1972, Elvis Presley performed at the Civic Center Coliseum in Roanoke, and Wayne not only covered the performance as photo editor, but later in 1977 published "Elvis in Roanoke", a pictorial account of his time with Elvis, and he purportedly even flew on Elvis' private jet.

After meeting and marrying the love of his life in 2003, Kathryn (“Kathy”) Deel, Wayne and Kathy moved to Clermont, Florida where Wayne embarked on his second career in hospital security and disaster response at Health Central Hospital in Ocoee, FL. For most of their 23 years together, they traveled to beachside locations and enjoyed watching their children and grandchildren grow.

Wayne was predeceased by his parents, as well as siblings Peggy Deel Markham, Robert “Bobby” Deel, Sr., and Michael Lee Deel. He is survived by his wife, Kathryn A. Deel; sons Christopher Deel of Roanoke, VA and Patrick Sean Deel of Nashville, TN and Florida; stepdaughter Jennifer McPeak (Jason) of Vinton, VA; stepson Christopher Deason of Roanoke, VA; and granddaughters Kaitlyn Welch and Sydney McPeak of Vinton, VA.

He leaves behind a wealth of friends with whom he had lifelong connections in both journalism and hospital safety. A moving tribute to Wayne (Remembering Wayne Deel) by Editor Brian Kelley was published in the Roanoke Times on May 24, 2026, and can be viewed at online at the Roanoke Times website.

Wayne left an impression on everyone he met. At 6’8” tall, he was a big man in every way; he had a big lust for life, a big heart, big adventures, big stories, and unwavering love. He will be missed.

There are no services planned. He had requested that his sons scatter his ashes in the mountains in Roanoke.