



Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews

August 29, 2023

Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews of Sarasota, Florida passed away on August 29, 2023 at age 90. He was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina to Marshall Lawrence Matthews and Mary Preston Bynum Matthews. He was the eldest of three boys, who lived apart for several years upon the illness and death of their mother when he was ten years old.

He was predeceased by his parents; his step-mother Ruth Benbow Matthews; his two step-brothers and their wives, who were all from Winston-Salem, North Carolina; his two sisters-in-law; and a nephew. His youngest brother, David Matthews of Alexandria, Virginia, died two days before him.

He is survived by his loving wife of 62 years, Betty Morgan Matthews, who he married in Munich, Germany; daughter Deborah Matthews of Miami, Florida; daughter Pamela (David) Klinger of Madison, Alabama; son Wade Matthews, Jr. of Austin, Texas; grandchildren Richard and Sarah Klinger; brother Lawrence Matthews of Walnut Cove, North Carolina; sister-in-law Amanda Carter of Alexandria, Virginia; and niece Mary (Don) Prouse of Decatur, Texas.

After 33 years, Mr. Matthews retired in 1990 as a career Foreign Service Officer with the rank of Minister Counselor in the U.S. Department of State. During his career, he lived with his family and worked in diplomatic and consular posts in eight foreign countries. He held acting ambassadorial

positions in Chile and Guyana and was Consul General in Ecuador. In Washington, D.C., assignments included Deputy Director of the U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States and Director of the State Department's Office of Central American Affairs.

In 1995, Mr. Matthews helped supervise elections in Bosnia for the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe. He traveled extensively for the Department of State in the former Soviet Union in 1992 assisting the establishment of U.S. embassies. He evaluated and recommended changes for professional recruitment in international organizations in Western Europe and America. Mr. Matthews taught a graduate-level course on U.S. post-cold war foreign policy. He loved to frequently speak to Florida organizations about the natural environment, population, international affairs, and civil liberties.

The world intrigued him even before he began reading newspapers daily at age seven until he died. Passionate about animals at an early age, he graduated with a degree in Zoology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After serving two years in the U.S. Army, he finished a year of law school at the University of Florida. In 1969, he completed a graduate study in Latin American Affairs at Stanford University. Mr. Matthews was a Professor of Strategy and Policy for two years at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. He spoke English, Spanish, and German and retained some once-fluent Portuguese.

After retiring to Sarasota, Florida, he became an advocate and community activist in international affairs and continued his life-long dedication to environmental protection and civil liberties. He served as President of the Sarasota-Manatee Chapter of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, the Conservation Chair of Sarasota Audubon Society for over 20 years, Chairman of the Government Oversight Committee of the Better Government Association of Sarasota County, President of the United Nations

Association Sarasota-Manatee Chapter, and on the Boards of Directors of Floridians for a Sustainable Population, the Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida, the Foreign Service Retirees Association of Florida, and other non-profit organizations. Mr. Matthews worked actively for the Democratic Club of Sarasota County and was also appointed to the Environmental Commission to select land for Sarasota County to purchase for preservation. He was an original member of the Wisemen, who met monthly for years debating and seeking solutions on global and international issues.

Mr. Matthews, a lifetime avid birder and observer of nature, loved exploring new places with his family. Always fascinated by cultures, history, and current events, he traveled to 170 countries visiting habitats worldwide and introducing his family to diverse creatures both in the wild and domestic. He had many beloved pets during his lifetime from dogs, macaws, and monkeys to snakes and more. His love of life and family will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota, 3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, FL 34232 on Wednesday, September 6, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.

A graveside service will be held at Mountain View Cemetery, 1401 Mountain View Road, Vinton, VA 24179 on Saturday, September 9, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. All are welcome to attend.

Memorials may be sent to Sarasota Audubon Society, 999 Center Road, Sarasota, FL 34240 or the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, 400 Palmetto Ave., Osprey, FL 34229

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

SEP 6. 2:00 PM (ET)

Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota
3975 Fruitville Road
Sarasota, FL 34232

Tribute Wall

VN

“ Dear Betty. I'm so sorry to hear about Wade's passing. I remember him fondly from the decade I worked at Selby Library and the many times he came to our environmental and genealogy lectures/programs, always so inquisitive and engaged. May you and your family cherish the great memories. Best, Vera

Vera Neumann-Wood - September 11, 2023 at 01:10 PM

AL

“ Dear Betty, Please accept our condolences for your loss. We will never forget the wonderful trips we shared with you and Wade and others to the Pantanal and Cuba. We will always remember Wade. With love, Alice and Builder

Alice Deutsch and Builder levy - September 07, 2023 at 05:29 PM

AD

“ Alice D. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews.

Alice D. - September 07, 2023 at 05:18 PM

DL

“ Wade was such a wonderful human being to the people and causes he encountered and embraced. The consummate gentleman, befitting a lifelong diplomat, a passionate advocate for nature and public integrity, and a brilliant and fun friend. Xin and I send our prayers (while traveling) to Betty and the family and hope that your many good memories help provide some solace in this time of sorrow.

Dan Lobeck - September 06, 2023 at 07:10 PM

DM

Thank you so much for your beautiful words. My father will always be remembered for his humor, stories, causes, diplomacy, and passions.
Debbie

Deborah Matthews - September 07, 2023 at 08:09 AM

DM

Wade was a wonderful member of our International Discussion Group of 10 made up of mostly retired Diplomats: Like Amb; Jim McGee, Terry Day, Lou Schwartz, Ergun Somerson, James Koloditch, Dorothy Lutter, etc. David@davidmcintyre.us

David McIntyre - September 10, 2023 at 03:59 PM



“ *Pretty Please was purchased for the family of Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews.*



September 05, 2023 at 11:53 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews.

September 05, 2023 at 03:29 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews.*



September 05, 2023 at 03:29 PM

WT

“ Wally and Son Yong Turner planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews.

Wally and Son Yong Turner - September 05, 2023 at 02:02 PM

WT

“ Wally and Son Yong Turner purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews.



Wally and Son Yong Turner - September 05, 2023 at 02:02 PM

SS

“ I extend my condolences to Betty and her family. I have known Bynum since I was a young girl and well remember his love of animals, especially snakes, and his vast knowledge of family trees, not only his, but neighbors and friends as well. I also enjoyed the stories he told of some of his experiences and local events. He had a full and productive life and is well remembered.

Sarah Stephens - September 05, 2023 at 11:27 AM

DM

Thanks for the memories. He certainly loved stories, snakes, and animals. Mom and Dad both are knowledgeable on family trees.

Deborah Matthews - September 08, 2023 at 12:53 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews.*



September 05, 2023 at 08:26 AM



“ *Maria M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews.*

Maria M. - September 05, 2023 at 08:20 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews.*



September 05, 2023 at 01:11 AM



“ *Our deepest condolences to Deborah, Mrs. Matthews and the entire Matthews family on the loss of your accomplished and dear father and husband, Wade. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all during this difficult time. Giselle and the Miami Ski Club.*



Giselle Sacon - September 05, 2023 at 12:03 AM

PE

Lovely sentiment Giselle on behalf of the Miami Ski Club. My deepest condolences to Deborah and her lovely family. So many years knowing Deborah and hearing about her wonderful, loving, traveling, adventurous Mom and Dad. I'm sure you have so many beautiful memories to cherish. I am truly sorry for your loss. Deborah, may your dear father RIP. All my love xox Pam

Pamela Epstein - September 05, 2023 at 10:44 PM

DM

Giselle and Pam, thank you for your beautiful sentiments and the generosity of the Miami Ski Club. I am sure that he is off on a new adventure!

Deborah Matthews - September 08, 2023 at 12:57 AM

TS

“ *Ave atque vale...*

Tatiana Staats

Tatiana A. Staats - September 04, 2023 at 01:46 PM

DM

A fitting tribute to a hero. Thank you.

Deborah Matthews - September 08, 2023 at 01:04 AM

KB

“ *See my previous comments for who Barry & Rob are. Wade was respected and admired by all who knew him. He was loved by those of us who knew him well.*

Boston sorry to hear this new ; awesome! I loved vi pter there.	Lynn extraordinary human e many wonderful m visits to the chapter
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Karen Bastis - September 04, 2023 at 12:20 PM

DM

Karen, Barry, and Rob, thank you for your tributes. He loved participating.

Deborah Matthews - September 08, 2023 at 01:06 AM

KB

“ *Wade Jr. getting a kick out of Dad trying to blow out HOW MANY candles on that cake? That was a happy day and a wonderful affair!*”



Karen Bastis - September 04, 2023 at 12:12 PM

DM

At least it was not 90. He loved his birthday party!

Deborah Matthews - September 08, 2023 at 01:07 AM

KB

“ A dear friend, Wade Matthews, passed away this past Tuesday. Betty, his wife, phoned me last night (on her 90th birthday) to share the sad news. These photos were taken on 7/1 at the party for Wade's 90th birthday. He fought and lost his battle against cancer. There will be a Celebration of Life at the UU Church on Fruitville on Wednesday 9/6 at 2:00pm. He will be buried in VA soon thereafter. See the link below for more details and a full obituary.

Wade was President of the local chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AU) while I was Treasurer. We sat on the Board for more than a decade and worked very closely together. He became a surrogate father of sorts to me, providing counsel and comfort since the late 1990's. Wade will always have a place in my heart and will be sorely missed.

Our fellow board members either predeceased Wade or I've lost touch with them. Rev. Barry Lynn was the National Director of AU during our years with the local chapter and spoke frequently at our local events, as did Rob Boston, who still holds a position with AU in DC. (Barry & Rob - this is Karen Bastis - Linda is my FB pseudonym).

While I don't use social media anymore, I'm posting this in hope other locals who may have known Wade will share it and be aware of Wednesday's event. He was phenomenally active in local politics, environmental organizations, and so many other causes during the 25 years I knew him. He was the consummate volunteer who successfully left his mark on this world. I honor the memory of this remarkable man.

<https://www.toalebrothers.com/m/obituaries/Wade-Matthews/Memories>



Karen Bastis - September 04, 2023 at 11:54 AM

KB

Sorry... lost the 1st line: This is what I just posted on Facebook.

Karen Bastis - September 04, 2023 at 11:56 AM

BA

“ *Wade always had a smile on his face. He was always late to meetings which got him a lot of kidding. It was my honor to work along side him as a Board Member of the Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida. He was a great story teller and his stories were even better when Betty helped with the narrative. We will all miss his presence and conversation.*

Becky Ayech

Becky Ayech - September 03, 2023 at 10:45 AM

TM

“ *Wade was a great public citizen, and a charming, witty, delightful man. I was sorry to be away from Sarasota at this time. We have lost a treasure.*

Tom Matrullo - September 03, 2023 at 08:16 AM

LO

“ *My heartfelt condolences to Betty. Wade was an inspiration to me and many others who admired his dedication and determination on protecting our neighborhoods and environment. I'll miss him.*

Lourdes - September 02, 2023 at 11:22 PM

LO

“ *Lourdes lit a candle in memory of Wade Hampton Bynum Matthews*



Lourdes - September 02, 2023 at 11:20 PM

KB

“ *Condolences to Betty and family — the community has lost a fine citizen. Wade's interaction with so many organizations enriched them, not only with Wade's broad range of knowledge and experience, but with his gregarious friendship. Kafi Benz*

Kafi Benz - September 02, 2023 at 07:28 PM

DM

Thank you for your condolences. He loved serving the community through his beliefs.

Deborah Matthews - September 08, 2023 at 12:42 AM

RB

“ *Wade was truly a Renaissance man. Every time our paths crossed I felt enriched. I wish I had known him longer. We were born the same year and joked about who was older. My sincere condolences to his dear wife and family. Rhana Bazzini*

Rhana Bazzini - September 02, 2023 at 04:26 PM

GR

My heart-felt condolences to Betty and the family. Our community has lost a dedicated protector and a great conservationist. Wade was a kind and gentle soul, a friend and mentor who I will miss greatly.

Gayle Reynolds - September 03, 2023 at 07:46 AM

SS

My deepest condolences to Wade's family. Their loss is also a loss for the community of lives in Sarasota and throughout the world for whom Wade's humor, intelligence, and caring heart made a positive difference. His contributions live on in the future.

Susan Schoettle

Susan Schoettle - September 03, 2023 at 02:44 PM

VN

My heart felt condolences to Betty and family. In my early days in Sarasota and going to more and more meetings of environmentally concerned folks, I always felt I was at the right place when Wade was there always displaying dedication and knowledge. He will be greatly missed!

Vicki Nighswander

Vicki Nighswander - September 03, 2023 at 11:00 PM

DM

Thank you Rhana, Gayle, Susan, and Vicki. All of you wrote such lovely comments about my father. He was all of these things and more.

Deborah Matthews - September 08, 2023 at 12:47 AM