

## **David Field Willis**

*Dec 7, 1939 – April 7, 2025*

*From The Chester Telegraph, August 23, 2025*

Born April 25, 1940, in Portland, Maine, he was the son of Elizabeth Lounsbury Field and Samuel Arnold Willis II and brother of Deborah. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Lillian Beery Willis; his son David and his wife, Kathleen; his son William and his wife, Betsy; and his son Sam and his wife, Tara; as well as his seven grandchildren: Morgan, Field, Carter, Molly, Leah, Charlie and Theo Willis.



Having grown up across parts of New England, from Portland, Maine, to Newburyport, Mass., to Guilford, Conn., David attended Deerfield Academy '58 and Yale University '62, where he majored in Architecture and sang bass with the Duke's Men and the Yale Glee Club, even traveling to Europe and South America to tour with the singing groups. Upon graduating, David moved to New York City, began working in advertising as a copywriter, and grew to become a creative director within McCann-Erickson; West, Weir and Bartels; and D'Arcy, Masius, Benton & Bowles.

In 1967, he married Lillian Beery. They later moved from New York to Norwalk, Conn., and then to Ridgefield, Conn., while their family grew. Focused mainly in New York, his advertising career also included positions as senior vice president of Wilson, Haight & Welch Inc.; senior VP at F. William Free/Laurence, Charles & Free Inc.; and senior VP, executive creative director at J. Walter Thompson Direct, and Jordan McGrath, Case & Partners/Direct Inc. He co-founded both Lombardo & Willis Inc. and The Special Projects Group Inc., where he spent the majority of his advertising years.

In what became more than semi-retirement, he finished out his working career as director of marketing for Spectro Motor Oils.

Never bored with advertising, creative marketing and direct-mail efforts, he relished his work with myriad, varied global corporations: ESPN, Citibank, Castrol, Airbus Industries, BMW Motorcycles, Adidas, Fuji Film, Georgia Pacific, the U.S. Mint, Sony, CIGNA, FlightSafety, Miller Lite Beer and others.

His advertising efforts won a Clio in 1970 for television commercials for the Lampert Agency; but more importantly all his experiences engendered lasting friendships, enhanced over the years by regular – sometimes weekly – email contacts. His friendships were fueled by a genuine love of people and their wide-ranging, shared interests.

His creative mind went well beyond marketing, and wherever he was known, there will be a memory of his friendly smile, the lively spark in his eyes, his engaging wit and inventive puns, his good eye for form and color, his breadth of interests and knowledge, and his fabulous memory for arcane facts that made him the perfect partner for the first version of Trivial Pursuit.

On the side, he was particularly fond of spending time at the “Shack,” a childhood beach house; researching his family genealogy; keeping abreast of all things vehicle (motorcycles, trains, planes, automobiles and racing cars – he had gone to racing school and owned a Lotus); reading military history; and filling his life with his meritorious passion, music.

In Connecticut he sang bass with St. Stephen’s Concert Choir, the Fairfield County Chorale, and the Camerata d’Amici, which he co-founded. Devoted to Bach and organ music, he once blew out his car’s speakers listening to a stirring organ piece by Widor.

In 2011, he and his wife moved full time to Chester, where, in progressing retirement, he continued to indulge in his love of music, house renovations, gardening, and outwitting deer and woodchucks from getting to his crops.

David was a most decent, moral, witty and intelligent person, well-loved by family, friends and associates.

A memorial service will be held at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 313 Main St. in Chester, at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 25, with a reception to follow.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks friends to consider sending a donation to:

**Friends of Yosemite Firehouse Museum**  
**P.O. Box 1221**  
**Chester, VT 05143**

*Located across the street from the Willis house in Chester, the historic Yosemite Firehouse is an iconic landmark that still shelters its original fire engines. On both the Vermont State and National Register of Historic Places, the building is likely the only twin-towered firehouse in the nation and is in the process of being transformed into a fire museum to honor the history of the firefighters, machinery and equipment that served Chester and its surrounding communities.*