



## Paul Edwin Howard

1947-2020

By [Messenger Staff](#) / Published on October 07, 2020

Paul Edwin Howard, 73, died Saturday, Oct. 3, 2020, at his home in Decatur.

He was born on Feb. 14, 1947, his mother's Valentine. Paul lived life well following his diagnosis of lung cancer in July 2019. Through the 14 months between his diagnosis and death, after brain surgery, after radiation and after chemo, his goal was always to have a good day, to work out and get stronger, and to get back to the golf course.

Paul loved his family and adored his two "sunshines". Date night every Wednesday with Mary, his wife of 53 years (Sunshine No. 1) and his granddaughter, Bella (Sunshine No. 2) was a sacred event in his life. Shane's wife, Becca, charmed him with her wonderful cooking and her care and concern for him.

He took up golf when his only son, Shane, began playing in high school. That led to a long, frustrating passion for gathering greens and hunting birdies. He hit two holes-in-one, every golfer's dream. The first was at his home course, Decatur Golf Club, and the second was in the Bishop Iker Challenge on hole No. 15 at Squaw Valley.

Hitting golf balls in the backyard and putting in the living room gave him hours of

fun, as his Cocker Spaniel, Freckles, gathered the balls into a pile for him.

Paul and Shane forged a bond of mutual admiration during their outings. When Shane handcrafted a putter for him, he was not only delighted with the new toy, but also proud beyond measure of the skills Shane began learning in the shop alongside him.

His grandson's family delighted him. No matter where he saw Mac and Cecilia, their three children, Abel, Leo, and Ellie, knew they were definitely the greatest of all great-grandkids.

Paul grew up in Decatur and was a DHS graduate, class of 1965. He attended Ranger College on a football scholarship but quickly decided bull riding was more fun and less dangerous. He left college in 1967 for four years service in the U.S. Air Force, mostly spent in the Strategic Air Command, 90th Missile Maintenance Squadron, at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyo.

On his return to Texas, he attended the University of North Texas, majoring in business. He went to work for the Woodruff Law Firm in the real estate department, which led to a career in the land title industry. He managed Cate's, Rattikin and US Life Title in Decatur. As part of the class of the first Land Title School at UT San Antonio, he and two fellow company managers wrote the first software used in the land title insurance business in Texas.

He loved to bass fish and was a founding member of the Decatur Bass Club. His hobby of working on boats for his fishing friends turned into an opportunity to leave the office environment. He began working on friends' boats in 1989 and officially opened Paul's Marine Service in 1990. He retired in 2018 but was still giving advice until August of 2020.

He loved his pets and always had a crew of dogs and cats. Almost all were rescues, except his spaniels. His first Brittany Spaniel, his favorite hunting breed, was registered as Paul's Sissy Anne. He loved his Cockers almost as much as they loved him. Freckles was in his lap during his last hours.

Alcoholism, or more importantly sobriety, was a huge turning point in his life. Through the grace of God and the help of AA, the Decatur Group became a second family to him. For well over a decade, he held several service positions, led Big Book studies and spent many hours on the phone with others seeking recovery from their addiction. The continued close contact with those men during his illness, when he could not risk being at meetings, was of tremendous importance to him.

Paul was preceded in death by his parents, Murrell and Marguriete Howard of Decatur.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Barnett Howard, of Decatur; their son, Shane Howard and wife, Rebecca, of Bridgeport; Shane's daughter, Bella Howard, of Bridgeport; and his son, Mac Whitcomb (Cecilia) and their children, Abel, Leo and Ellie.

Other family includes his brother, Brett Howard of Grapevine (children Courtney Howard Tetrick and Colton Howard), as well as many Howard and Starnes cousins. Paul was a much loved and respected member of Ascension and St. Mark Anglican Church, where his funeral will be held on Thursday at 10:30 a.m. Oct. 8. Visitation will be at Hawkins Funeral Home in Decatur 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 7.

Burial will be at DFW National Cemetery in Arlington at 1:15 p.m. Monday, Oct. 12.

Officiating is the Rev. Keith J. Roberson. Pallbearers include Rick Bowling, JH Brazier, Tom Ferguson, Royce Moore, Sean Williams, Eric Wright and Danny Harvey.

Masks are required at all events due to the number of immune-compromised family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a memorial to Ascension and St. Mark, an animal shelter or rescue group, Hero Labradors in Decatur ([herolabradors.org](http://herolabradors.org)), or a charity of your choice.

*Hawkins Funeral Home Decatur*

940-627-5959 [hawkinsfuneralhome.com](http://hawkinsfuneralhome.com)