



Peter Folsom Smith

August 14, 1940 - January 3, 2026

Peter Folsom Smith, of Shepherdstown, WV, passed away on January 3, 2026 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Peter and his wife, Victoria, moved to Shepherdstown in 2003, after both had retired. Prior to his retirement, Peter was Director of Public Affairs for the Washington, DC-based Association of American Universities from 1989 to 2002. Before that, from 1973 to 1988, he served as press secretary to three different U.S. Senators. Earlier, he worked as a reporter at two Iowa newspapers, first the Dubuque Telegraph-Herald and then the Cedar Rapids Gazette.

While living in Shepherdstown, Peter was active in many community organizations, in recent years especially the Shepherdstown Rotary Club and Friends of Music. From 2006 to 2012, he served as president of the Potomac Valley Audubon Society and presided over a major reorganization of that organization. In 2008, he was one of the original members of the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation's Two Rivers Giving Circle and he continued to be active in that organization. At various times, he served on the boards of the Friends of the Shepherdstown Library, the Shepherdstown Men's Club, and the Shepherdstown Visitors Center, and he assisted many other local organizations with projects on an informal basis.

During 2011 and 2012, he chaired a committee that organized and directed the major events related to Shepherdstown's 250th anniversary celebration. Starting in 2013, and through July 2025, he organized the town's annual 4th of July and Christmas parades on behalf of the Shepherdstown Rotary Club. In 2024 and 2025 he co-chaired a committee that organized and directed the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the 1775 Bee Line March, Shepherdstown's most significant Revolutionary War event.

In 2011, he received a National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution Conservation Award. In 2013, he was the Jefferson County recipient of the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation's Spirit of the Panhandle Award, which recognizes individuals in the region for their service to the community.

Peter was born and raised in New Canaan, CT, and attended public schools there. He graduated from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in 1962 and did graduate work in art history and literary criticism at the University of Iowa. While an undergraduate, he sought and received conscientious objector draft status. Later, while in graduate school and after the Viet Nam war had become a major conflict, he was drafted and served two years as a nurses' aide at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, most of that time in the hospital's psychiatric unit.

He and Victoria were married in 1974 and lived in Alexandria, VA, before moving to Shepherdstown.

He is survived by Victoria.

In lieu of flowers people may make memorial contributions to the charity of their choice.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JAN 31. 11:00 AM (ET)

Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church
100 W. Washington Street
Shepherdstown, WV 25443