



Neal Lingafelt
Schuszler

Sept. 5, 1947 - July 21, 2025

Neal Schuszler, 77 years old, died in his home after a period of declining health. Neal was born on September 5, 1947 in Cincinnati, Ohio, to Vivian and Al Schuszler.

He is survived by his siblings and their spouses: Faith Grill (Tom), Fred Schuszler (Jeanette), and Val Schuszler (significant other, Cyndi), by many nieces and nephews (who adored him), loving cousins, and a close group of longtime friends and cherished students from his teaching days.

Neal held a Master's degree in English from UNC, Chapel Hill. While in graduate school he was drafted into the National Guard. He was for many years a beloved and creative English teacher at North State Academy in Hickory and The Waldorf School in New York.

When that career had run its course, he became a long-distance truck driver, which suited his "loner" personality and love of adventure, travel, discovering new places, and listening to literature, sports, and rock music while rolling over the roads of this great land. After early retirement, he was the primary care-giver of our mother, and said he taught her "the fine art of buying a vowel". (A reference, of course, to the

Wheel of Fortune game show.)

The scope of his intelligence and wonder of his wit were a joy to experience, but his scorn could be withering. He kept his family and friends either laughing or guessing what he would do or say next.

Neal in younger years was an athlete. He was proud of lettering in sports at the same Cleveland Heights, Ohio high school as famed NFL stars Travis and Jason Kelsey. He remained interested in all forms of sports, including attending a Mohammed Ali prizefight, the Masters and other PGA golf tournaments, Yankee games, and UNC basketball games. He made an attempt to see a baseball game in every original MLB park and was a life-long Yankees and Cleveland Guardians fan; with an impressive baseball card collection.

He loved literature and questioned the intelligence of anyone who didn't read. His voracious reading was a source of solace, enlightenment, and entertainment throughout his life, but especially in his declining years.

Neal, from childhood, loved movies. He had strong, informed opinions on what made a film great and which films deserved being considered great, sometimes expressing a contrarian view.

He was an early fan and became an authority on rock music. Neal worked his way to the front row of a Beatles concert on their first American tour and attended too-many-to-count Springsteen concerts, among concerts by every other rock band and artist he liked.

Neal was a world traveler, including trips to Canada, Europe, Australia, and a safari in Africa. Throughout the USA, he visited virtually every historic area, place written about in American literature, settings for classic films, or spot mentioned in a rock n' roll song.

Neal excelled at being a great uncle. He enjoyed teaching his nephews and nieces card games and playing old-fashioned board games with them. He introduced them to outdoor games like Whiffle ball, miniature golf, and horseshoes. "Uncle Neal" (or "Nealie") introduced them to classic, age-appropriate films while they were children and gave them, as they grew up, college-level instruction and appreciation for rock

and gave them, as they grew up, college-level instruction and appreciation for rock music, great films, classic television shows, and fiction.

Although he never married, he loved women, of whom he said made life transcendent. He often quoted the adage: "Out of 100 men who go astray, 99 are saved by women, and only 1 by divine grace."

His life was scarred by being bi-polar, tragically not diagnosed until later in life. He said when confronted with the news of having a manic-depressive personality, he didn't know whether to laugh or cry. (A favorite quip.) He also said he thus became one of the few people to both teach - and live - *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Despite his share of disappointments and heartaches, regrets and missteps that kept him up late into the night, pondering the agonizing "what ifs" of life, Neal summed up his perspective using this concise line from a favorite film:

Remember, as you navigate through life, "leave the gun, take the cannoli."

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



He was witty as a teacher and personable. He was definitely liked by his students and shared unique perspectives on English Literature.

—Sonya L Gotz

I have so many fond childhood memories of summers and Christmases in Morganton and Neal was so central to those experiences. He had a talent for turning the ordinary into the "very special" whether it was a song, a game or just driving Val and me back from Granny's to their house at night. Neal had driven through that town so many times he knew the synchronicity of the lights and he would adjust his speed to the changing of the lights from red to green. Every time it would seem we would for sure run the red light Neal would command it to change and it would just as his words were spoken. Neal had an amazing appreciation for music and so much of what I listen to and how I listen to it was shaped by him. I remember at 12 or 13 years old being introduced to a group called "Sea Train" and I knew and know every word to every song on that album. Some fifty years later, about half of that album is on my Spotify list. Neal visited us a couple of times each year when we lived in Winchester, VA. I never knew he was coming and it was such a wonderful surprise when I would see that blue - wasn't it a Corvair? - in our driveway when I came home from school. Neal would say his goodbyes on the day he was leaving as I went to catch the school bus and I would beg him to please stay one more day... please, please, please. I would come home from school and his car would be gone and I would cry that he

had left. But then I would go in the house and he would be there hiding! He would park his car around the corner so he could surprise me. Neal was special to my Mother and special to me. He positively impacted my life in many ways. I can't believe he is gone. I hurt for Faith, Fred and Val and their respective families. I know how much love was shared between them all. I am praying for God's comfort to envelop each of them.

—MIKE LATELLA



—Stephanie Spainhour

Mr. Shuszler was and will forever remain one of my greatest teachers. Most all instructors at North State Academy in the late '70s were phenomenal. Although a voracious reader that always sought to enlighten myself I didn't do well in a school environment. I didn't like going. Except for Neals class. His was one I couldn't wait for! From Bruce and AC/DC. Raw eggs and "The Lottery." "The Warriors" and the "Baseball Furies." A life of purpose and being to those that remember. See you on the other side.

—Phillip Ranke



Fond memories and special talents shared and appreciated by many. On to the next journey!

—Rick Karges





—Kylie



—Jean Patton

I am so sad to hear of Neal's passing. Although I never met him, he sounds like he was someone I would have enjoyed since he loved good books, good music, good movies and Tar Heel basketball. My condolences to Fred and all the family and I pray for God's comfort to you all.

—Jane Harper



Thank you for everything you taught me. You helped shape the person I am today and I will be forever grateful. I love you.

—Daniel Grill

—Mary Helen Cline

While sad to hear of Neal's passing, this day does conjure memories of my high school classroom years ago. Neal brought the poetry of Keats, Byron and other literary luminaries to life, along with many asides on the musical poetry of Bob

Dylan and the Who. His class was a unique exploration of the romantic past and the sometimes raw present, taught by a man who experienced it all in a special way. Bon voyage, Neal.

—Brent Huffman

I'm sad to learn of Neal's passing. Neal was always a treat and entertaining to be around. I enjoyed hearing Neal and Charlie Peacock banter. He and Mother (Dot) used to share their "Kents", (sadly). He last made the trip to Salisbury after Charlie+ Vivian had passed, to see Dot, us Spaws and our son, Daniel; they would pick up the banter where Charlie & Neal left off.... My love goes out to Faith, Fred and Val and all of the extended family. I'll miss knowing that Neal is close, Lynn Peacock Spaw

—Lynn Peacock Spaw



Praying for a peaceful rest, Cousin Neal. It will be like one of our beloved family reunions in heaven I'm sure. Your adventurous life was full of accomplishments. Time to fully rest now. Sending you off in sweet love from Todd and I.

—Rena Lingafelt-Becker

Neal and a small circle of high school teachers at The Waldorf School shared some delightful after school dinners at a local diner and at the home of Madame Coombs, where Neal engaged us with his cache of stories and witty repartee. Always private, enigmatic and well defended, he allowed us to get a glimpse of his rich inner life of thoughts and true feelings from time to time. The high school students in his care absolutely adored him and gathered around him before, during and after school. He was the rock star among the Waldorf faculty in the early 80s.

—R Rothenbucher

—Janie Matthews

Fred and your family, I send my love, hugs, and prayers to each one. Neal seemed like a great person to meet but I enjoyed, if I may say without meaning it bad, reading about his life. It seemed to have been incredible journey. Again I sending my prayers, love, and hugs. Patti Gallion (Margaret Berry's granddaughter)

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What a wonderful story. I work at the office of his PCP and was sad to hear of his passing. I didn't realize his life story was so eventful. He will be missed. He was a sweet man. It looks like he shared a lot of his knowledge with his family and friends. Hopefully they took his advice. I pray you find strength in the knowledge that we don't die, only our physical body does. I am sure he will be around you so keep a look out for flickering lights or things falling for no reason. Look up and say Hi!

—Lynda Cartwright

He was truly one of a kind. Gone too soon...

—Betsy Blatz