



Benjamin Lester Abberger III

November 22, 1952 - August 15, 2025

Benjamin Lester Abberger III, a fourth-generation Floridian who devoted his life to making his state a better place, died on August 15, 2025.

Lester was a Renaissance man who valued learning, reading, sports, the outdoors, and public service. He was born to Nancy Hardy Abberger and Benjamin Lester Abberger, Jr., M.D. on November 22, 1952, in Orlando. He attended Davidson College in North Carolina, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science. Lester also completed the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and was a Knight Fellow at the University of Miami School of Architecture.

Following his interest in politics, Lester worked on the 1976 presidential campaign of U.S. Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas. After the Bentsen campaign, he returned to Florida where he worked as a Cabinet aide to Florida Treasurer and Insurance Commissioner Bill Gunter. He then worked in the U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration in Washington and eventually came back to Tallahassee, where he served in various government relations roles for the Florida Hospital Cost Containment Board, the Florida Hospital Association, and Florida Water Services.

He went on to form his own firm, B.L. Abberger and Co., a public affairs and investment banking concern. Throughout his career, he represented the interests of numerous philanthropic, not-for-profit, and civic causes before the Florida Legislature.

Nationally, he served as Chair of the Board of Directors for the Federation of State Humanities Councils, served on the League of American Orchestras Board, and served on the Board of Visitors at Davidson College.

In Florida, he served as Chair of the Board for the Museums of Florida History, Friends of Florida History, the Florida Humanities Council, 1000 Friends of Florida, the Florida Conservation Campaign, the Leroy Collins Institute at Florida State University, and Leadership Florida. He also served on the board of the Florida Audubon Society.

In Tallahassee, the city he loved, he served as Chair of the Bach Parley, Habitat for Humanity, the Leroy Collins Leon County Library System, Horizon Communities (a faith-based prison ministry), the Tallahassee Urban Design Commission, and Health News Florida. Additionally, Lester served on the Boards of Florida First Capital Finance Corporation, the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, and the Tallahassee Neighborhood Medical Center. He helped lead the effort of the Knight Creative Community Institute group whose Get Gaines Going initiative invigorated and redesigned the corridor between downtown Tallahassee, Florida State University, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, and the airport.

An avid reader, he consumed books at a prodigious rate, ranging from works of philosophy to spy novels. He particularly loved historic nonfiction (especially American and southern history) and journalism. He was a gifted, passionate, and competitive athlete, including being the State of Florida High School triple jump champion. After high school, Lester continued to be a keen basketball

player and participated in many pickup groups in Orlando, Washington, and Tallahassee, where he regularly played at First Baptist Church and met many dear and lifelong friends. He also enjoyed playing racket sports including tennis and squash, and he also learned to play handball. Lester was a lifelong Atlanta Braves fan and, during baseball season, was known to enjoy listening to games on the radio while simultaneously reading a new book.

Lester was a dedicated conservationist who cherished the natural world. He loved spending time outdoors fishing and hunting birds, especially quail, whenever he had the opportunity and was known as an excellent shot. He cherished his English cocker spaniels, Ruby and Henry. Lester earned the title of Florida Master Gardener and Florida Master Naturalist, and he collected Florida landscape art and Chinese export porcelain.

Lester loved reminiscing about Old Florida, growing up in Central Florida, and playing in the family orange groves. Throughout his life, he spent many enjoyable days in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina with his parents and family. A loyal and cherished friend to many, he was known as a true gentleman and a scholar by his friends and associates.

He is survived by his wife Amanda Leigh Stringer and stepchildren Elizabeth Shipp Sauer and Benjamin Storms Sauer, brothers John Albert Abberger (wife Gretchen Paxson Abberger) and nieces Mary Ellen Abberger and Caroline Elizabeth Abberger), and William West Abberger (wife Mary Anne Koos). He is predeceased by brother Eric Hardy Abberger.

The family is immensely grateful for the care Lester received at Big Bend Hospice. In lieu of flowers, they ask that you honor him by taking a walk to enjoy nature, reading a book, listening to music, or tending a garden. Donations in his memory may be made to one of the many nonprofits he

loved, including 1000 Friends of Florida and the Leroy Collins Institute.

A celebration of Lester's life and an old-fashioned oyster roast are planned for November in Tallahassee.

Breanna Green of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the family with their arrangements.

Tribute Wall

CM

“ Lester was an Orlando childhood friend of my children’s father Robert. We shared many wonderful years together and adored his parents Nancy and Ben. Lester was my daughter’s Godfather. What a tremendous loss to all who loved him. My prayers are with his wife, step-children, his brothers John and Will as well as their families.

Cindy McMillan Murphy

Cindy Murphy - August 21, 2025 at 09:48 AM

HF

“ Over many years of assisting APA-Florida during legislative sessions, Lester and I shared our mutual love of Florida's environment and its many developmental and policy challenges. He truly was that quintessential southern gentleman who frequently surprised you with his vast knowledge and insights. I'll miss our Florida discussions.

Henry Bittaker, FAICP - August 19, 2025 at 07:30 PM

AM

“ Lester is one of the few people who genuinely made the state of Florida a much better place by being here. I was honored to know him and work with him, and was deeply saddened to hear of his passing.

Ana McGuinness - August 18, 2025 at 03:51 PM



“ Lester was a true Florida visionary. He was always pushing the discussion to include all viewpoints. His brilliant mind will be so missed in policy making.

Robert McKnight - August 18, 2025 at 10:41 AM

CF

“ I enjoyed working with Lester and I especially enjoyed chatting with Lester during the long hours waiting for something to happen during many legislative sessions. Lester is already missed.

Cam Fentriss - August 16, 2025 at 12:38 PM