



Perry Max Dawson

August 11, 1928 - August 12, 2023

Perry Max Dawson, 95, of Tallahassee, Florida, passed away August 12, 2023. Funeral services will be at 2:00 pm on Friday, August 18, at Lafayette Presbyterian Church, with burial at the Tallahassee National Cemetery. Perry is survived by his wife of 68 years, Ruth, his four daughters, and nine grandchildren.

Perry was born in August 1928 to BJ and Lottie Dawson in a small farming community in east Texas. He was the second of eight children. Growing up during the Great Depression, Perry had first-hand knowledge of the hardships of rural families.

After graduating from High School, Perry served for four years in the United States Army Air Corps (Air Force). Perry earned a Bachelor of Science degree at East Texas State College, now Texas A&M University-Commerce, and a Master of Business Administration at Southern Methodist University. He took Army Air Force Reserves Officer Training, gaining the rank of 2nd Lieutenant. While teaching high school business courses in Dallas, he met his future wife Ruth Hope, a first-grade teacher. They were married in September 1955.

Perry began his career in the credit union movement in November 1955, working as a loan officer, assistant general manager and acting general manager at Dallas Teachers Credit Union. Under Perry's leadership, in 1963, the bylaws were amended to include black teachers and other school employees. Dallas Teachers Credit Union became the largest in Texas.

Perry was hired in 1967 as General Manager of Hillsborough County Teachers

Credit Union (now Suncoast Credit Union) and moved his family to Tampa, Florida. At that time, it had 4,500 members and 18 employees. When Perry retired as President and Chief Executive Officer, in 1996, after 40 years in the credit union movement, Suncoast Credit Union had grown to become the 12th largest credit union in the United States.

Many of the credit union movement's foundational principles of financial democracy are a direct reflection of Perry's leadership, guidance, and moral compass as he was involved on the state and federal level in the early stages of the growth of credit unions around the country. Unlike banks, credit unions are owned by the members, not shareholders. Every member's vote is equal, no matter their financial status, race, or gender. He sought to provide members with the knowledge and tools to enable them to prosper and achieve financial well-being. His hiring and membership goals reflected his personal commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Perry served as president of the Tampa chapter of the Florida Credit Union League, the Credit Union National Association, the Credit Union Executive Society. He was inducted as a charter member of the organization's Hall of Fame. He received a lifetime achievement award from the Credit Union National Association. In addition, Perry helped found the Education Credit Union Council and served on the Board of Directors. In 1989, was voted most admired credit union CEO in the United States. He served for six years as the director of the Jacksonville Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. Perry was very involved with the Presbyterian Church (USA), serving as a deacon and an Elder for many years. Golf was his favorite pastime. Perry and Ruth also traveled extensively, both in the United States and internationally. Perry always expressed gratitude for his health, his family, and his career. Todd Wahlquist is assisting the Dawson family with their arrangements (850-385-2193, www.bevisfh.com).

Cemetery Details

Tallahassee National Cemetery

5015 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, FL 32311

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG 18. 2:00 PM (ET)

Lafayette Presbyterian Church
4420 Mahan Dr.
Tallahassee, FL

Tribute Wall

AW

“ On behalf of our entire team at the Florida Office of Financial Regulation, please accept our deepest sympathies. We just wanted to let you know that our thoughts are with you and your family.

Amy Whitehead - August 20, 2023 at 05:56 AM

MA

“ MariaS lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson



MariaS - August 18, 2023 at 05:33 PM

DB

“ Mr. Dawson was wonderful as a person and a leader. I was employed by Suncoast Schools Federal Credit Union for 12 years and was fortunate enough to experience life there with Mr. Dawson at the helm. He was a shining example of how to treat people. I wanted to send my most heartfelt condolences to Ruth and family. Sincerely, Donna Geist Brauer

Donna Brauer - August 18, 2023 at 04:18 PM

DG

Thank you for your kind words. We're going to miss him. Diana Dawson Graham

Diana Graham - August 19, 2023 at 02:33 PM

SW

“ *Serina Washington sent a virtual gift in memory of Perry Max Dawson*



Serina Washington - August 18, 2023 at 11:09 AM

SW

“ *From my heart to yours truly. Althought ive never met Mr.Dawson, i believe cause we value the same morals, i would have charish you dearly, my prayers are with your family that thier hearts be comfort in knowing that you are with the Beloved Father hands now.*

Serina Washington - August 18, 2023 at 11:07 AM

DC

“ *Dear Ruth and family,
We are thinking of all of you today in the loss of dear Perry. May peace and comfort from above be with you today and always. Perry was a very special person and we have many fond memories of serving with him for many years at First Presbyterian Church of Brandon. Prayers, David and Sondra Cone*

David Cone - August 18, 2023 at 10:04 AM

PA

“ *To Diana & her mother & sisters, I am so sorry for the loss of your dad & husband. He is in a better place now out of pain . He loved you all very much & will continue to watch over all of you until you all meet again. My condolences go out to all of you*

Pat - August 17, 2023 at 08:22 PM

LH

Thank you Pat.

Lon Hyers, Diana Grahams, husb. - August 17, 2023 at 08:35 PM

KJ

“ *Mr. Dawson meant a great deal to many people in the Suncoast family. He was so kind, thoughtful and an inspiration to many. He truly lived the credit union philosophy of people helping people. His legacy will live on for a very long time as it continues to be passed down to current and future leaders of Suncoast. My condolences to Mrs. Dawson and the rest of the family. - Kevin and Susan Johnson*

KEVIN JOHNSON - August 17, 2023 at 05:49 PM

VP

“ *A servant leader in every aspect. Condolences to the family.*

Velia Pedrero - August 17, 2023 at 02:32 PM

VC

“ *Velia C. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Perry Max Dawson.*

Velia C. - August 17, 2023 at 02:16 PM

TD

“ *Both a pillar and cornerstone within the credit union movement. A gentleman and a professional. Rest in peace Perry. You touched the life's of many in a constructive and positive fashion. My condolences to Ruth and the Family.*

Tom Dessy - August 17, 2023 at 02:11 PM

KM

“ *My deepest condolences to Mr. Dawson's family. May his soul rest well.*



Kiyara Marshall - August 17, 2023 at 11:50 AM

EW

“ *As Mr. Dawson joins the heavenly saints, he leaves a remarkable legacy in the Credit Union Movement. His leadership at Suncoast Teachers Credit Union now Suncoast Credit Union built a staff of incredible talent that continues to make Suncoast a leader nationally and internationally.*

Earl Whitlock - August 17, 2023 at 05:30 AM

KH

“ *Kelly H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Perry Max Dawson.*

Kelly H. - August 17, 2023 at 01:22 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Perry Max Dawson.*



August 16, 2023 at 09:06 PM

TT

“ *Sending our deepest sympathies. Mr. Dawson was an amazing role model in serving the community, especially to my late husband, Joe. So very sorry for your loss.* ”

Teresa Trumbach - August 16, 2023 at 08:30 PM



Thank you so much for your kind words.

Rebecca Sosa - September 01, 2023 at 10:10 PM

GR

“ *Giselle Radigan lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson* ”



Giselle Radigan - August 16, 2023 at 06:08 PM



♥️ *thank you* 🙏

Rebecca Sosa - September 01, 2023 at 10:11 PM

AS

“ *Many wonderful memories of Mr Dawson. His friendly smile around Suncoast was always a special greeting. He will be missed by many. Condolences to the entire Dawson family.* ”



Audrey L Santafemia - August 16, 2023 at 05:59 PM



♥️ *Thank you*

Rebecca Sosa - September 01, 2023 at 10:06 PM

JL

“ Jean Luc lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson



Jean Luc - August 16, 2023 at 05:52 PM

PM

“ PM lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson



PM - August 16, 2023 at 05:39 PM

DL

“ Debbie Lawson lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson



Debbie Lawson - August 16, 2023 at 04:57 PM

ZZ

“ Zsa Zsa lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson



Zsa Zsa - August 16, 2023 at 04:48 PM

SC

“ Sam C lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson



Sam C - August 16, 2023 at 04:45 PM

ST

“ I will always remember him and how he impacted my life.



Stacey - August 16, 2023 at 04:19 PM

RO

“ Rose lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson



Rose - August 16, 2023 at 04:10 PM

LI

“ Lianna lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson



Lianna - August 16, 2023 at 04:03 PM

ST

“ Stephanie lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson



Stephanie - August 16, 2023 at 04:02 PM

KL

“ Kaiti Lingard lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson



Kaiti Lingard - August 16, 2023 at 04:02 PM

DM

“ One of my fondest memories of Mr. Dawson was at Christmas. He would put on his red vest and each of us would go to his office to get a hug, well wishes and a turkey and/or the giveaway for that year. He was a leader by example and will be missed. Thoughts and prayers for the family during this time.



Donna Moses - August 16, 2023 at 04:01 PM

KT

“ Keilyn Thurman lit a candle in memory of Perry Max Dawson



Keilyn Thurman - August 16, 2023 at 03:59 PM

GS

“ *Giedarilis Sicard sent a virtual gift in memory of Perry Max Dawson*



Giedarilis Sicard - August 16, 2023 at 03:58 PM

LL

“ *Perry was a gentleman of utmost integrity and a very devoted member of Lafayette Presbyterian Church. Our family was fortunate to have his friendship for many, many years. We will miss his smile, his positive attitude, his kindness, and his wisdom. He made a difference in this world and his legacy is a beautiful family. To his family we thank you for sharing Perry with us for so many years through friendship and service to others.*

*Respectfully,
Leo, Kay, and Kevin Lachat
Tallahassee, Florida*

Leo, Kay, and Kevin Lachat - August 15, 2023 at 07:33 PM

DG

Thank you for your kind words. Our father was very special. We will miss him. Diana Dawson Graham

Diana Graham - August 19, 2023 at 04:56 PM



“ *Sacred Duty Spray was purchased for the family of Perry Max Dawson.*



August 15, 2023 at 03:03 PM