



## Robert Edward "Ted" Turner, III

November 19, 1938 - May 6, 2026

Ted Turner, the audacious cable pioneer, arguably best known for creating CNN and Turner Broadcasting, Inc., died on May 6, 2026, at his home in Lamont, FL at the age of 87.

Ted Turner was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on November 19, 1938, to Robert Edward Turner, Jr. and Florence Turner (née. Rooney). At the age of nine, Turner's parents moved him and his younger sister Mary Jean to Savannah, GA, so that his father could pursue a career in billboard advertising. At the age of 12, Turner was sent to board at McCallie, an all-boys school in Chattanooga, TN, with whom Turner maintained a lifelong relationship.

After graduating from McCallie, Turner continued his studies at Brown University in Providence, RI and later served in the U.S. Coast Guard. Upon leaving Brown, Turner began his professional career at his father's billboard company, Turner Advertising Company, eventually taking over as president following his father's death.

Turner Advertising Company proceeded to acquire five radio stations in the Southeast, ultimately selling them in order to purchase television station channel 17 in Atlanta, GA which Turner aptly named "WTCG" (Turner Communications Group, now known as Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.). It was WTCG that acquired the rights to air Atlanta Braves baseball game, a move that quickly expanded its audience and popularity among viewers. Upon transmitting Channel 17 content to local cable providers, WTCG's subscribers grew profoundly. A groundbreaking decision at the time, Turner put WTCG, which was renamed WTBS, on satellite, thus competing with national heavy hitters like NBC and CBS.

But Turner was far from finished leaving his mark on the cable and news industry. In the late 1970s, several years after first envisioning the idea of an around-the-clock news channel, he began seriously pursuing what many believed could never work. At the time, no one had ever created a 24-hour news network. Turner's vision was bold and ambitious: a global news operation dedicated to serious journalism, delivering news around the clock in an unbiased manner while promoting truth in media and, ultimately, greater understanding and world peace. In 1980, Turner officially launched the Cable News Network (CNN), the world's first live 24-

hour global news network. In doing so, he forever transformed the news industry, redefining how news is gathered, delivered, and consumed across the globe, and setting a new standard for modern journalism that continues to influence global media today.

Over the next two decades, Turner Broadcasting, Inc. built a portfolio of unrivaled cable television news and entertainment brands, including CNN Headline News (HLN), CNN International, Turner Network Television (TNT), Cartoon Network, and Turner Classic Movies (TCM). In 1996, the company merged with Time Warner, Inc. and in 2001, Time Warner merged with AOL, becoming AOL-Time Warner. The company would later change its name back to Time Warner. Turner ultimately departed the company in 2003 and stepped down from the board in 2005. The former networks and assets of Turner Broadcasting System are now under the ownership of Warner Bros. Discovery.

For many, Ted Turner's name is synonymous with Atlanta sports. In 1976, Turner purchased the Atlanta Braves baseball team from his friend Bill Bartholomay, who was responsible for moving the franchise from Milwaukee to Atlanta. Under his leadership, the Braves climbed from 'worst to first,' winning five pennants and the 1995 World Series. In 1996, in recognition of Turner's

achievements and commitment to the Braves organization, the team's new stadium in Atlanta was given the name "Turner Field". The Braves went on to play 21 seasons at Turner Field.

In 1977, Turner purchased the Atlanta Hawks, a team that, along with the Braves, most likely stayed in Atlanta because of Turner. Although Turner's ownership of both sports teams dissolved upon Time Warner's acquisition of Turner Broadcasting, Turner's son Beau and son-in-law Rutherford Seydel went on to become part owners of the Hawks as members of Atlanta Spirit LLC from 2004 to 2015.

Turner also secured a place in sailing history in 1977, as he led the Courageous crew to America's Cup victory. Turner's sailing achievements earned him a spot on the cover of Sports Illustrated, and induction into the America's Cup Hall of Fame and the National Sailing Hall of Fame.

Although involved in philanthropy for decades, in his later years, Turner turned his focus almost solely to his charitable endeavors. In 1990, Turner founded and chaired the Turner Foundation, a family foundation focused on safeguarding habitats, bettering communities, sustainable living, and environmental protection. Later that same year, Turner co-created Captain Planet and the

Planeteers with his colleague Barbara Pyle, an animated, environmental television series that continues to attract fans even today. In 1991, the cartoon series inspired the creation of the Captain Planet Foundation by Turner and Pyle, which is chaired by Turner's eldest daughter Laura Turner Seydel, and empowers youth to protect and improve our environment through hands-on education and projects. In 1997, Turner made history by pledging \$1 billion to the United Nations. The following year, he founded the United Nations Foundation, which operates offices in both New York and D.C. and focuses its efforts on issues such as women and children, disease, and energy and climate. In 2001, Turner and Senator Sam Nunn co-founded the Nuclear Threat Initiative, whose core objective is to eliminate nuclear, biological, radiological, chemical and cyber weapons, which Turner believed to be society's most pressing issue.

His foundation work gave him great pride and satisfaction. So much so, in fact, that Turner signed The Giving Pledge, committing himself to give away the majority of his wealth to charitable causes – which he achieved prior to his passing.

In respect to the legacy he wished to leave, it was a simple, yet lofty one: “to make our world a better, safer place than it was when I got here.”

Turner's happiest moments were spent on his lands where he claimed to have felt most at home, surrounded by his bison, as well as numerous other animal and plant species. For instance, he found solace fly fishing on his ranches in Montana during the summer months; quail hunting and fishing in the fall and winter on his southeastern properties in Georgia and Florida; and spending early to late spring on his properties in New Mexico which are part of the Ted Turner Reserves portfolio of nature tourism destinations. In an effort to protect the habitats of the species living on his lands, some of which are imperiled or endangered, and to conserve the biodiversity of his properties, Turner founded the Turner Endangered Species Fund in 1997. The Fund, which works closely with all of Turner's properties, has seen great success in species such as the Desert Bighorn Sheep, Aplomado Falcon and the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout. At the time of his death, Turner was also one of the largest private landowners in the United States with approximately two million acres. The well-being of these properties and the species present on each was of utmost importance to Turner; therefore prior to his death, he created the Turner Institute of Ecoagriculture, an agricultural research organization (ARO), which operates exclusively for charitable, scientific, and educational purposes – ensuring that upon his passing, his lands will

continue to be protected, limiting future development and parcellation.

Up until his passing, Turner served as co-chairman of Turner Enterprises, Inc., (TEI) with offices in Atlanta and Bozeman, MT, which managed his business interests, investments, and landholdings, including his 45,000 bison herd. A longtime proponent of clean energy sources, Turner created a renewable energy division within TEI - Turner Renewable Energy - which has collaborated with companies on large-scale solar projects.

Housed in the same downtown Atlanta building as TEI's Atlanta offices are Ted's Montana Grill headquarters, which he co-founded in 2002 with restaurateur and Longhorn Steakhouse founder George McKerrow. Ted's Montana Grill, which features the largest bison menu in the world, operates dozens of locations across several states, and (in keeping with Turner's principles) implements numerous, environmentally conscious practices within its restaurants.

Turner's achievements earned him great recognition and numerous awards, including 48 honorary degrees; his being named TIME Magazine's 1991 Man of the Year; induction into the National Sailing Hall of Fame, Cable Television Hall of Fame, and Atlanta Braves Hall of Fame; United Nations Global Leadership Award; Lifetime Achievement Award given by the

National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences in both “Sports” and “News & Documentary”; numerous Peabody awards; a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame; and most recently, he received the 2026 Sierra Club Vanguard Award for his longstanding leadership in environmental conservation, land preservation, and climate and sustainability advocacy, among thousands of other honors. Although having accomplished more professionally than most would ever dream, when asked what his greatest achievement was, Turner would respond without hesitation: “My family.”

Turner was married three times. His first marriage to Judy Nye produced two children: Laura Lee (“Laura”) and Robert Edward, IV (“Teddy”). Turner later married Janie Smith, with whom he had three children: Rhett Lee (“Rhett”), Reed Beauregard (“Beau”), and Sara Jean (“Jennie”). In 1991, Turner married actress Jane Fonda, to whom he was married for 10 years. Despite their divorce, the two remained close friends.

Turner is preceded in death by both parents, a sister, and one grandchild.

He is survived by his five children, daughter Laura Turner Seydel (Rutherford), son Robert Edward “Teddy” Turner IV (Blair), son Rhett Turner, son Beau Turner (Georgia), daughter Jennie Turner Garlington (Peek); fourteen grandchildren: John. R. Seydel

(Savannah), Vassar  
Seydel, Laura Elizabeth Seydel, Robert E. Turner V, Riley Turner, Selden  
Turner, Alessandro  
Rhett Turner, Beau Turner, Jr., Anna Garlington, Hope Garlington, Peek  
Garlington IV, Sara  
Bailey Garlington, Haven McCoy Garlington, Jane Grayson Garlington; and  
two great  
grandchildren, Nora Gentry Seydel and John R. Seydel, IV.

Turner was a man known for his no-holds-barred delivery, endearing sense of  
humor, and  
undying loyalty to those around him. Turner charmed people he met with his  
warmth and  
general lack of conceit, despite his many successes and celebrity – an  
attribute made apparent in  
his response to anyone who addressed him as “Mr. Turner”: “Call me Ted,”  
he’d say  
(consequently, the title of his 2008 autobiography and 2024 HBO Max  
docuseries of the same  
name).

The family has planned a private service. A public memorial will be held at a  
later date.

In lieu of flowers, the Turner family requests that you consider a charitable  
contribution to one of  
the following organizations:

United Nations Foundation – [www.unfoundation.org](http://www.unfoundation.org)

Nuclear Threat Initiative – [www.nti.org](http://www.nti.org)

Captain Planet Foundation – [www.captainplanetfdn.org](http://www.captainplanetfdn.org)

Lewy Body Dementia Association – [www.lbda.org](http://www.lbda.org)

Dayne Parker of Bevis Funeral Home has the honor of assisting the Turner family with their local arrangements.