



Karl Litten

August 30, 1933 - May 5, 2025

Karl Litten passed away peacefully on May 5, 2025, at the age of 91, at Arbor Terrace Assisted Living Community in Asheville, NC. A devoted husband, beloved brother, proud grandfather, and true citizen of the world, Karl leaves behind a legacy of ingenuity, generosity, and quiet determination that stretched across continents and communities.

Born in 1933 in the small town of Gassaway, Virginia, and raised in Ohio, Karl learned the value of hard work early in life. He worked at a steel mill and gas station throughout high school, graduated from Toronto High, and soon after served his country in the U.S. Army, stationed in Germany from 1953 to 1955. His years of service were just the beginning of a life defined by grit, warmth, and vision.

Upon returning from service, Karl set up shop in Ohio, leading an engineering project instrumental in constructing the Ohio River Dam from 1955 to 1958. Alongside him on the crew was his younger brother, Randall.

In 1957, Karl married the love of his life, Nancy, and together they set off for Miami the following year in search of opportunity and a fresh start for their growing family. Karl and Nancy adopted their first and only son, Paul Litten, in 1964. The three of them lived a nurturing, exciting life, spending time with family, attending Miami Dolphins games, and traveling across the U.S.

Professionally, Karl transitioned from construction into architecture while in Miami, eventually discovering a passion for golf course design that would shape the rest of his career. Starting at the firm of Bruce Devlin and Robert Von Hagge, Karl worked his way up to vice president before founding his own design practice in 1979. A partnership with legendary golfer Gary Player soon followed, leading to the creation of world-renowned courses from Florida to Japan, Cairo to Dubai. His groundbreaking work at the Emirates Golf Club and Dubai Creek remains part of the PGA Tour today.

Karl was revered in his field, gaining a reputation for his ability to work with difficult terrain. Often called a “developer’s architect” for his civil engineering sensibility, he was recognized by the PGA as one of golf’s “fab four” designers, alongside the greats of golf design — Nicklaus, Palmer, and Fazio.

Though his work spanned the globe, Karl made Asheville his home later in life and found peace among the mountains and neighbors of Beaverdam Run. He was a constant presence in the community, tending his plot in the community garden or catching up with friends at First Fridays. To know Karl was to be welcomed, respected, and seen.

Karl will be reuniting in heaven with his son, Paul Litten, who passed away in 2023, along with many beloved family and friends.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 67 years, Nancy Litten; his brother, Randall Litten; sister, Anna Lea Wirth; stepbrothers, Joe Litten and Chester Litten; grandsons, Andrew Litten and Ian Litten; and nieces and nephews Kristin Burnitz, Dirk Litten, Todd Litten, Chad Litten, Doug Wirth, and Greg Wirth.

A memorial service will be held on Thursday, May 15 at 11:30 AM at Morris

Funeral Home, 304 Merrimon Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801, officiated by Pastor Marcia Mount Shoop. Parking is available behind the funeral home, though space is limited — carpooling is kindly encouraged.

A reception with light food and refreshments will follow at 1:00 PM at the Beaverdam Run Clubhouse, 54 Clubside Dr, Asheville, NC 28804, where friends and family will gather to share memories and celebrate Karl's remarkable life.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAY 15. 11:30 AM (ET)

Chapel of Morris Funeral Home
304 Merrimon Ave.
Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 252-1821
info@morrisfamilycare.com
<http://morrisfamilycare.com>

Officiated by Pastor Marcia Mount Shoop

Refreshments

MAY 15. 1:00 PM (ET)

Beaverdam Run Clubhouse
54 Clubside Drive
Asheville, NC 28804

Friends and family will gather to share memories and celebrate Karl's remarkable life.

Tribute Wall

BR

“ I was sad to hear the news of Karl's passing recently. I met Karl in 1998 when coming to one of his golf course designs, Broadmoor Golf Links. Even though Karl was a world class golf course architect, known around the world, he was quite unassuming and humble. He taught me a great deal about infrastructure and design of a golf course and supported my career. We had some good times, car rides and lunches, what few they were and I really enjoyed his 90th birthday celebration. The honor was mine. Godspeed my friend!

Brett - May 20, 2025 at 10:49 PM

DS

“ So sorry to hear this and really saddened to hear about Paul. I didn't know. I had the pleasure of meeting Karl and Nancy through camping at Myrtle Beach with my girlfriend's family. Later in life, it was nice seeing him and Nancy at the All School Reunions. My condolences to the family.

Dani Rock Swearingen - May 13, 2025 at 11:26 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Karl Litten.



May 10, 2025 at 01:21 PM

KR

“ 8 files added to the album Memories



Keith Ryan - May 08, 2025 at 07:40 PM

AL

“ 20 files added to the album Memories



alitten15 - May 08, 2025 at 02:21 PM