

FDICNews

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Employee Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2025

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FDIC Support Groups Provide a Safe Place for Exploring, Sharing, and Listening

By Sonya Weakley
Writer, Office of Communications

Before she joined the FDIC's Grief and Loss Support Group, Leeann Woods was not sure how she was feeling until Don Watts, Ph.D., asked her how she was doing.

"Oftentimes you don't know how you're doing until you express what's going on with you," Woods said. "Before I joined this group, I just felt like I was all over the place. When I would put in my terms, I felt like I was Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz."

Woods, who is an Automation Information Assistant in the Division of Risk Management Supervision (RMS), described that feeling as having "a lot of separate pieces around me, and I'm in the middle trying to figure out where to even start."

Even though the February group session was the first one she had attended, Woods said she felt comfortable expressing herself because Watts, who is the group leader and a dedicated clinical counselor in the Employee Life & Career Development (ELCD) office of Human



Resources, made her feel comfortable.

"I think it's great that the FDIC allows this for the employees because often you feel isolated and not knowing what to do, and there are others who may be experiencing some of the same things," Woods said.

THREE ONGOING GROUPS

In addition to the Grief and Loss group, which meets the first Tuesday of the month, ELCD sponsors the Caregivers Support Group on the first Wednesday of the month and the Parenting Roundtable

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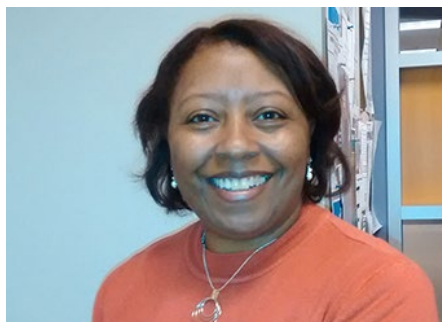
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Martin J. Gruenberg, Acting Chairman, FDIC
David Barr, Deputy Director, OCOM
Sonya Weakley, Writer/Editor, OCOM
Inam Hyder, Internal Communications Strategist, OCOM
Alison Maynard, Designer, OCOM

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Luke Reynolds, DCP, LuReynolds@FDIC.gov

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on the first Thursday. All the groups meet virtually, so employees can participate from anywhere in the country. Participation ranges from five or six to as many as 40, depending on the situation.



Leeann Woods

ELCD also offers dedicated clinical counseling within the agency and outside referrals through the WorkLife Connections Employee Assistance Program (User ID: fdic; Password: 5057). Employees, as well as families and loved ones, may attend up to six sessions with a clinical counselor in their local area for each specific concern per year, at no cost.

GRIEF AND LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Terri Hansen, another participant in the Grief and Loss group, also appreciates the availability of the groups. “I love that they do these things for us. I consider them benefits.”

Hansen, who is a Senior Consumer Response Specialist in the Division of Depositor and Consumer Protection (DCP), said it was nice to see another employee she recognized in the group, but was surprised to hear her story.



Terri Hansen

“She and I are friends, but I didn’t know that about her,” Hansen said. “It gives you a different level of clarity with people in this corporation. We’re all professionals, and though we go through these things in our lives, we come back to do the job.”

Watts said Hansen has a way of making people feel comfortable. “Dr. Watts is amazing. There’s a calmness in his voice. It’s a reassurance. And he makes you feel heard.”

Watts, who is based in Dallas, said he opens each Grief and Loss meeting with an overview of the stages of grief to help members consider where they might be in the process. He also discusses the topics, which include journaling, self care, handling guilt, and the value of talking, among others.

“One big one is secondary losses,” he said. “If someone loses their spouse, there are all sorts of losses beyond the spouse, from identity to finances to family issues. We go through those and try to help people understand them.”



Don Watts

Regardless of the topic, he always asks participants how they are doing, what is of interest to them, and whether they feel stuck in a particular stage. He encourages them to talk, but understands if they just want to listen. “Generally things open up. Talking helps process your emotions and feelings and helps give you clarity.”

He said it doesn’t matter what the reason is for feeling grief. “Generally this group is about death. These are not small issues, and the people in it, in my opinion are really courageous people.”

Watts also stresses that what is said in the group is confidential, and that is the case for all three of the groups.



Gregory Fitzgerald

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Gregory Fitzgerald has been attending the Caregiver Support Group for several years. “It’s really been a lifeline for me because I don’t have any other family support,” he said. “I look forward to the meetings each month because even though it is not necessarily the same group of people, it is nice to have a place where people understand you.”

Regardless of whether participants are caring for parents, spouses, or other family members, “you know they understand the journey of caregiver, which is not an easy journey,” he said.

Fitzgerald, who is a Community Affairs Specialist in DCP in the New York Region, said the benefits of participating in the group extend beyond the meetings. He will reach out to group members to get advice, an opinion, or an idea if something comes up.

He also contacts the group leader, Corliss Gillespie, LPC, a dedicated clinical counselor, if he knows she’s working. “I just ping her on Teams and say, hey, I have a question, or have you ever faced that, or what resources are available. So it’s been really great,” he said.

He also appreciates being able to candidly discuss concerns about work, such as the challenges presented by going into the office every day. “That’s a big concern for me. What am I going to do now? I can talk through what are some of the things I can do.”

Fitzgerald said he was “pleasantly surprised” that the FDIC offers these groups, adding that he has often shared with his manager how much the group

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has helped him in his work as well as his personal life.

Gillespie said the Caregiver Support Group is a community of employees who are in various stages of their caregiving roles, some at the beginning, some near the end. Participants may be caring for an adult child, an elderly parent with dementia, a neighbor or friend.

Gillespie said she likes to start meetings by asking what is going well. "We typically open the groups with a win to anchor our time together with something positive. They may share something that has really worked for them," such as finding a resource helpful that someone in the group had suggested.

"When we're focusing on providing resources, such as navigating Medicare or Medicaid, or giving information where there are very specific steps to take, I found that leads to more input," she said.



Corliss Gillespie

She said there is a mix of regular participants and new members at each meeting and that most people are dealing with specific issues and want guidance, support, and resources. ELCD also offers a dependent care consulting service, and Gillespie often refers participants to that to help them find local resources.

THE PARENTING ROUNDTABLE

The consulting service also helps participants in the Parenting Roundtable find childcare, as well as after-school care and in-home assistance, in their local areas. Loretha Tate, MS, LPC, NCC, who facilitates the group, said those concerns are growing in light of the requirement to return to the office every day.



Loretha Tate

"Here lately, everybody's just trying to find balance between work and lifestyle because when you work from home, you have a better opportunity—when you don't travel—to make sure your kids get that healthy breakfast, drop them off at school, and pick them up at the end of their day," she said.

"When you're back in the office, it's pretty much that check-in in the morning, rushing them from dinner, rushing them through getting into bed, and you don't really get to spend that quality time like you like," she added.

Tate said the group is called a roundtable because everyone is given a chance to speak. "However, if someone doesn't speak, I do a check-in with each person, to make sure everybody is getting attended to and has the opportunity to say something."

She asks those who don't feel comfortable speaking to put something in the chat. "I just want to hear from everyone to make sure everybody is ok," she said. "This is safe space for them to talk about anything."

Each session focuses on a specific topic, such as failure to launch, coping skills, parenting through transition, nurturing emotional development, effective communication, conflict resolution, social media, screentime, and more. "However, I let them know that this is their space, their time. So if it morphs into something else, we allow it."

She said people bring resources to share with the group that are added to an Excel spreadsheet that everyone can access. In addition to parents, the group includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, and people who may be expecting a child.

Allegra Zachery has attended the Parenting Roundtable for about a year. She decided to join when she saw an email about a topic that caught her eye. "I was trying to juggle work-life balance as a newer mother, and then also try to balance career progression and growth," she said.

Zachery, who is a Supervisory Examiner in DCP in the Atlanta Region, said she was a little reserved in the beginning, but said that Tate "really made it an inviting group. It was just so nice to know that I was not the only one in that particular situation."

She said the group has a mix of newer parents and those who have raised many children while traversing their careers, and she appreciates that the FDIC provides the groups. "I think it's a wonderful attribute of our agency to allow us to have a space where we can really



Allegra Zachery

foster work-life balance and have open and honest conversations."

She enjoys the fact that she can collaborate with and talk to other FDIC employees. "It's a really good opportunity to find common ground on a topic and share ideas," she said.

"Loretha is a really, really good facilitator. She makes you feel comfortable enough to share your perspectives, share your experiences, and just ask questions of the group," Zachery said.

GET MORE INFORMATION

The FDIC offers a range of services through Employee Life and Career Development. Employees can locate them through the FDIC Employee Center.

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“In the outside world, when you go to meetings, everybody is so busy talking, nobody listens,” said Hansen, who attends the Grief and Loss group.

“In these gatherings, people listen. They're more inclined to listen than they are to speak. And that's not altogether bad because they're receptive to hearing things. And, these are the moments when, if you think about it, it's not being selfish, but this hour once a month, it's all about you.” 🏠

2025 ELCD ROUNDTABLE TOPICS			
	GRIEF & LOSS	CAREGIVERS	PARENTING
MARCH	The Value of Writing	Helping Aging Parents Downsize and Making Caregiving Mobile	Nurturing Emotional Development
APRIL	Secondary Losses	Financial and Legal Implications in Caregiving	Parenting in the age of AI, Social Media, and Technology
MAY	Grief Guilt	Navigating Healthcare Systems: What You Need to Know	Positive Parenting vs. Gentle Parenting
JUNE	How Long Should I Grieve	Nutrition and Meal Planning for Loved Ones	Effective Communication and Conflict Resolution for Healthy Parent-Child relationships
JULY		Self-Care Importance of Respite Care	
AUGUST		Story Sharing- How to revive lasting memories with loved ones	

The Power of Reflection

By Shanna Webbers, Division of Administration



FDIC News is pleased to join Corporate University to publish the Leadership in Action series of articles exploring emerging leadership development topics that are important at the FDIC. Each month, we feature an article on what it means to be a transformational leader—someone who influences people to think, speak, and act to make a positive difference in their lives and those of others.

Leadership is a continual learning process. Amid the constant push for more, faster, and better, many leaders have lost sight of the power of a pause—a deliberate moment to evaluate, realign, and move forward with clarity. Taking time to process experiences and consider outcomes of past decisions allows leaders to extract wisdom and apply it to future decisions. It transforms hindsight into foresight, equipping leaders to navigate the complexities of the future more effectively. It also enhances self-awareness, boosts emotional intelligence, encourages learning and growth, improves decision-making, and strengthens leadership presence.

FROM CHAOS TO STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP: GAIN CLARITY

My days usually consist of a packed calendar with endless back-to-back meetings and an email box that is overflowing to the point I can’t keep up. This seems to be the norm for most leaders. But does this type of busyness equate to productivity? I can unequivocally say “no.”

Constantly being in meetings and answering emails led me to have a lack of strategic focus. I didn’t have time to think about the meaningful, impactful work that would move my organization forward. I felt out of control and exhausted. I wasn’t managing my time well and it was surfaced in how I showed up to work every day for my team. When I finally couldn’t take the chaos any

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longer, I made a deliberate decision to stop, pause, and reflect.

This simple act made me feel at peace and I found clarity. Leaders who reflect are more grounded and less likely to be swayed by emotions and external pressures. This composure is infectious, inspiring confidence and respect among team members and colleagues.

STRATEGIC REFLECTION: AN IMPERATIVE

In a culture that often equates busyness with productivity, pausing can feel counterproductive. Yet, this deliberate pause is not about inactivity; it is about intentionality. It is about creating space to think deeply, act purposefully, and lead authentically. It's the difference between being busy and being impactful, between reacting to change and leading through it.

As Maya Angelou once said, "You can't really know where you are going until you know where you have been." I've taken this wisdom to heart. I now create space to look back, learn, and chart a more intentional path forward.

STEPS FOR PRACTICING REFLECTION: BE PURPOSEFUL

Knowing the value of reflection is one thing, but effectively integrating it into a busy schedule is another. Here are some practical suggestions for getting started:

1. Schedule Time

Consistency is key. Set aside time in your schedule that is non-negotiable. It could be early mornings or a few minutes at the end of each day. I block Friday afternoons to reflect and focus on deep, critical thought to gain clarity and stay grounded.

2. Ask Targeted Questions

To assist in provoking your thoughts, ask questions such as "What am I proud I did today?" "What could I have done better?" "Did my decision achieve the desired results?" "How did I handle a challenge?" "What impact did I have on others today?" Tailor the questions to your situation to gain more insight into

your leadership style and decisions. I start by asking myself a question and it often leads to new questions that I may not have otherwise considered.

3. Keep a Reflection Journal

Write down your thoughts, feelings, and observations. It helps in organizing your thoughts but also serves as a record of your growth and learning over time. It can also identify patterns or serve as a reminder of how to handle a similar situation. I keep a separate journal dedicated to reflection as an easy reference.

4. Seek Feedback

Reflection doesn't have to be solitary. Engaging with mentors, coaches, or trusted colleagues can provide new perspectives. Feedback can challenge your assumptions and encourage deeper insights, enriching your leadership growth. I process information by talking it out so seeking feedback is an important factor in my reflection process.

Conclusion: A Call to Action

Leadership is demanding. As leaders, we face immense pressure to keep up with the pace of change. But the real challenge is to slow down. Taking intentional pauses to reflect can lead to greater clarity. The courage to pause isn't a sign of weakness; it's a hallmark of strategic leadership. In doing so, you won't just transform yourself—you'll transform our organization and the people we lead.

A thoughtful pause allows leaders to discern what truly matters and avoid being overwhelmed by less critical demands. Clarity through reflection enables leaders to focus their energy on initiatives that align with their long-term vision and values. By taking the time to pause, leaders demonstrate the courage to take a step back and assess, the humility to learn from experience and the foresight to prepare for the future.

Do you have the courage to pause, reflect, and act with intention?

Shanna Webbers is Deputy Director of the Acquisition Services Branch in the Division of Administration. 📧



Shanna Webbers

Data: How the Library Can Support Your Research Needs

By Kay Lewandowska, Reference and Collection Management Librarian, and Kate McGovern, Acquisitions Librarian

Do you know who purchases the majority of FDIC's of commercial data and commercial information? If you guessed the FDIC Library, you would be correct. We collaborate with research teams, data scientists, and the data curious to evaluate and negotiate for future research needs.

The library plays a vital role in assisting employees by identifying, acquiring, and licensing commercial data across various subjects, such as real estate, capital markets, finance, geographic information systems, and more. By acquiring access to commercially available datasets—often sourced from specialized data providers—the library enhances our collections, expands the Corporation's data community of practice, and provides users with access to information not readily available from what many think of as traditional library materials. We are a data-driven team connecting FDIC employees with the data resources they need to accomplish our mission.

Some examples of the datasets that we purchase available to all FDIC employees include:

Banking Risk & Regulation, provided by FT Specialist

- This is The Financial Times' dedicated resource for risk owners and senior professionals in risk and compliance across all three lines of defense; a resource used to help mitigate risk and stay abreast of potential challenges by providing concise, essential and global coverage and analysis. (Available to all FDIC employees. Self-register by [signing up for a free trial](#) with your FDIC.gov email address, and you will be added to the library's enterprise license.)
- In addition, The Financial Times is hosting a free webinar on "Transforming Banking with GenAI," and we encourage you to sign up. The webinar is available to all FDIC employees who have signed up for our new "The Banker" enterprise access. You can register [here](#).



FDIC Library

Bloomberg

- We have access to Bloomberg data through terminals, a limited amount of "Bloomberg Anywhere" access, and Bloomberg data feeds. If you have not used Bloomberg data services, please reach out and we can arrange training.
- This service provides both real-time and historical pricing, indicative and fundamental data, commodities information, and more.
- Using Bloomberg Services—Access through special dedicated terminals in DC and VASQ. Please contact the library for more information.

CBRE Econometric Advisors

- CBRE provides commercial real estate research on offices, industrial, retail, apartments, hotels, and residential. Their research provides comprehensive coverage of the United States and Canada. Partnering with Dodge Data and Analytics, CBRE also provides access to construction data through all phases of construction. (Available to all FDIC employees. Please contact the library for more information.)

Fitch Ratings PRO

- Fitch provides users with credit research, credit ratings, macroeconomic and financial fundamental data, country risk research and indices, industry research, Financial Implied Ratings, and a curated news service. The FDIC subscribes to all Fitch modules, including Corporate Finance, Financial Institutions, Public Finance, Sovereigns, and Structured Finance. (Available to all FDIC

employees. Please contact the library for more information.)

PolicyMap

- PolicyMap offers users a data warehouse of over 50,000 indicators accessible through a mapping and analytics platform. This web-based tool can be used to visualize and understand communities across the United States. Users can layer data sets on a mapping interface and select multiple parameters to understand the policy and demographic relationships to banking and financial information. Maps and data can be exported for internal use as well. (Password required. Please contact the library for more information.)

Wharton Research Data Services

- Wharton Research Data Services (WRDS) is a business intelligence tool from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. WRDS provides researchers with access to financial, economic, and marketing data through a uniform, web-based interface. Data is compiled from independent sources that specialize in historical data, including Capital IQ, NYSE, CRSP, and Thomson Reuters. WRDS provides access to Dow Jones, TRACE, BoardEx, Execucomp, Compustat, and other business research datasets. (Available to all FDIC employees. Self-registration and use of multi-factor authentication (MFA) are required. Please see this webpage for more WRDS-specific [MFA information](#).)

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Research Support, from page 6

We have many datasets, databases, and data resources with “limited” access for areas of interest including commercial real estate, financial markets, industry data, and default risk and global credit default swaps. Please reach out to the library if you need access to data—if we have a resource already, we will work with you, if we do not have a resource, we can start the process for a new to the FDIC acquisition—with a strong justification and your office/division leadership support. In many ways, the Library Services Unit is a data services unit serving FDIC employees and the American public.

Want to learn more? Join us for one (or both) of two consecutive sessions at the FDIC Data Summit on Thursday, February 27, 2025:

- Data Opportunities for Financial Regulators, 12:30–1:45 p.m.
- Commercial Data Resources, 2–3:15 p.m.

We hope to see you there!

The information and data needs of the FDIC are constantly evolving. We are here to partner with every division and office in accomplishing the mission of the FDIC.

If we don’t have what you need, we need to know that. We will work with you, your leadership, and your colleagues across the FDIC to achieve success.

As always, if you have any questions or need help, please contact us for assistance at library@fdic.gov.

This article is part of an ongoing series of contributions from the FDIC Library. 🏠

Moving On

Name: Pamela Freeman

Most recent position: CRA Program Manager

Division/Office: Division of Depositor and Consumer Protection

Location: Washington, DC

When and where joined the FDIC:

I joined the FDIC as an Assistant Bank Examiner in the Shreveport, Louisiana field office on July 30, 1990. I got my commission in Risk Management and later switched to Compliance with the start up of DCA, now DCP. I served in two regions (Memphis and Atlanta) and headquarters during my career.

Career highlights: Career highlights: Becoming known at the FDIC and in the industry as a CRA expert, which involved many years of exam oversight, policy work, and rule writing. I am passionate about CRA and banks giving back to their communities. Additionally, I enjoyed being Chief of the Fair Lending and CRA Section in DCP and my detail as an Acting Assistant Regional Director in Chicago. The people I have worked with and gotten to know through my various positions have enriched my career and life.

Retirement date: March 22, 2025, although my last day of work is February 20, 2025.

Plans for retirement: Lot of travel, which will include spending more time with my husband, granddaughters, and other family. When not traveling, I am hoping to volunteer my time, play some golf, spend time in our pool, and just generally be more active.

Additional comments and thoughts:

It was an honor and a pleasure to serve the FDIC and the public for nearly 35 years. Throughout my career and various positions, I have worked with intelligent, passionate, and dedicated people and have made a number of lasting friendships. I will miss FDIC and my amazing colleagues! 🏠



Pamela Freeman

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Moving On, *cont.*

Name: Donna Bell

Most recent position: Supervisory Examiner

Division/Office: Division of Risk Management Supervision (RMS)

Location: Seattle, WA

When and where joined the FDIC: I joined the FDIC June 1989 in Seattle, WA Field Office.

Career highlights: I enjoyed a 35+ year career where I was able to stay in the same office that entire time. While I was able to do many different details and work during that time, my time spent in Seattle was very rewarding. I traveled and worked in some really nice places—Hawaii, Alaska, Ecuador, and Panama—and worked with some amazing people.

Retirement date: February 7, 2025

Plans for retirement: Enjoy a simple life away from the busy city and work life. My husband and I moved to a smaller community with a house on five acres and are enjoying the quiet and wildlife.

Additional comments and thoughts:

The FDIC was a wonderful career and provides an important safeguard to our financial system. I hope all employees know their worth and continue to do this important work. 🏠



Donna Bell

In Memoriam

Maxine Curtis

Former Financial Management Specialist

Maxine Derreberry Curtis, age 81, a beloved figure of Knoxville, sadly left our world on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, after a life richly lived in faith and kindness.

She joined the FDIC in 1983 when United American Bank in Knoxville, Tennessee, was closed, and FDIC was appointed receivership.

What Maxine thought was going to be temporary employment at the FDIC became a long career that took her to the Northeast, New York, Texas and finally, to headquarters. She was most recently a Financial Management Specialist in the Division of Finance.

Maxine retired to take care of her five grandchildren.

Known for her amazing generosity and kindness, Maxine was a beacon of light and hope in her community, touching lives through faith and dedication to her family and friends. She was a long-time member of First Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Maxine is preceded in death by James and Nora, Diana, Patricia, and James Curtis. She leaves a legacy through Jeffery Greggry, Brian, Briana, Kaytlin, Samantha, Dawn, Christina, Justin, Christopher and Patrick. Her memory will be a guiding star for all who knew her.

The Celebration of Life was held January 26, 2025, at First Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Graveside service took place January 27, 2025, at Greenwood Cemetery, Tazewell Pike. 🏠



Maxine Curtis

In Memoriam, *cont.*

Robert A. Dorbad

Former Bank Examiner

Robert A. Dorbad of Norfolk, Virginia passed away on February 13, 2025, at the age of 85. Born August 21, 1939, in Pittston, Pennsylvania, he was the son of George C. Dorbad and Elizabeth J. Dorbad (née Baker). He graduated from Georgetown University in the School of Foreign Service and from the University of Wisconsin in the Graduate School of Banking.

His career was spent in the employment of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, FDIC in New York, Washington, D.C. and in Philadelphia, where he served as Regional Director. He was a long-time FDIC examiner who rose to high-level positions in supervision within what was then the Division of Bank Supervision (DBS). He later became director of human resources.

Beloved father, son, brother, uncle and friend, he was a storyteller, history buff and an avid reader. For decades, he visited the public library daily and would pore through a stack of books every week. He passed on the importance of education to his children and began organizing trips to university campuses when they were quite young. He was skilled in mathematics, closely followed business news

and played the stock market. A lover of music, tennis, and automobiles, he greatly appreciated beautiful landscapes, culinary delights and especially ice cream in all of its forms.

His children remember their youth filled with the arts, New York museums, the ocean, sailing, sports, amusement parks, trips to special playgrounds, and skiing in the mountains. On many occasions, he said that having children was the best thing that he ever did.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his siblings, Joseph Dorbad, George W. Dorbad and Mary Sitkowski; and his niece Kim Hall. He is survived by his sister, Joan James of Purcellville, Virginia; his children, Elizabeth of Nevada City, California; Robert and his wife Allison of Nags Head, North Carolina; David and his husband Brandon Brinkley of Norfolk, Virginia; his former wife and mother of his children, Mary Dorbad (née Gordon) of Chesapeake, Virginia; his grandchildren, Lincoln, Josie and Sage of Nags Head, North Carolina; many wonderful nieces and nephews; and his longtime best friend, Kathy Corigliano of Danbury, Connecticut.

A celebration of life service will be held at H.D Oliver Funeral Home, Norfolk Chapel, 1501 Colonial Avenue, Norfolk,



Robert A. Dorbad

VA 23517, on February 22, 2025, at 2p.m., followed by a reception at the Slover Library, 235 E. Plume Street, 3rd Floor, Norfolk, VA 23510

Online condolences and memories may be shared with the family at [H.D. Oliver Funeral Apartments, Inc.](#) Donations in his memory may be made to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. To plant trees in his memory, please visit the [Sympathy Store](#). 🌳