

## Ambassador Howard Dean Pittman obituary



Ambassador Howard Dean Pittman (Dean), 67, passed away suddenly at his residence in Washington D.C. on June 4, 2024. Dean touched many lives, leaving a legacy reflective of his gentle manner and southern charm. Born in Norfolk, Virginia on August 31, 1956, to Paul Howard Pittman and Betty Pittman, Dean was six when the family moved to his father's hometown of Tylertown, Mississippi. Growing up in a small town with his sisters Shane and Elise, his childhood was filled with Sunday dinners at his grandmother's house, neighborhood games of kick the can, scouting adventures, school, and sneaking off to the bakery in the wee hours of the morning.

Perhaps working as a cub reporter and photographer for the family business, the Tylertown Times, sparked his interest in politics. Considered one of the nation's best small-town newspapers, the Tylertown Times was a principled voice for equality and progress during the tense civil rights movement. Through her many efforts to promote tolerance and fairness, his mother was a voice of reason in this era. Moved by the example of his parents, Dean developed a love for political participation, a strong sense of place, service, and ethics.

While earning a B.A. in political science from Millsaps College in Mississippi, Dean interned with Senator Ted Kennedy. After graduation, Dean entered the Peace Corp teaching English in a remote village in Gabon. Heading to Washington, D.C., Dean dove into the flurry of political life, working as a Legislative Assistant for U.S. Congressman Wayne Dowdy for eight years and subsequently as his reelection campaign manager. Propelled by a keen interest in politics and international affairs, Dean received an M.A. from The Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies before joining the Department of State in 1989.

Throughout his career, Dean served in numerous senior leadership positions within the State Department, at the National Security Council, and overseas. He quickly became known as a talented leader with significant policy and management expertise. He sought out opportunities to serve in conflict prone states, promoting peacebuilding, and reconciliation, and taking difficult stances guided by his core ethical principles. His early postings included Guyana, Mozambique, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as a year as a diplomat in residence with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), focusing on democracy-building initiatives.

From 2000 to 2002, Dean served at the National Security Council as the Director for Balkan Affairs, coordinating all of U.S. Government efforts bringing stability to this conflict-affected region. While special assistant to Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Dean volunteered to go to Iraq when few others would consider such a risky mission. Once in the Green Zone, as the Deputy Director in the Governance Office of the Coalition Provisional Authority, Dean assisted Iraq's transition to an Interim Iraqi Government and engaged with provincial teams to

improve governance throughout the country. It was in Iraq that Dean met his future husband, Chris Milligan, a USAID Foreign Service Officer.

Dean served as Consul General in Belfast, Northern Ireland from 2004 to 2007, where he furthered peace and reconciliation actively engaging with political and community leaders and building intercommunity cooperation. His efforts contributed to a power sharing arrangement and increased stability, a legacy which is still felt today. While a member of the Secretary's Office of Policy Planning, Dean was appointed Senior Diplomacy Advisor to the Department's First Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review instituting reforms that improved the effectiveness of the State Department and USAID. First as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and then as the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Dean leveraged the contributions of multilateral organizations and allies to advance U.S. foreign policy goals. Dean returned to Mozambique as the U.S. Ambassador in 2016. He was thrilled to be back in a country that meant so much to him, embracing the cultures, music and its natural beauty, travelling extensively to connect with communities across the country.

Retiring in 2019, Dean read extensively, particularly about American history. He enjoyed travelling, tennis, and cooking with and for friends. Always generous with words and smiles, he will be remembered for his gumbo and martinis, wit and intelligence, and warmth and character. He is survived by his husband, Chris Milligan, his mother, Betty Pittman, and his sisters, Shane Pittman and Elise Pittman, his mother-in-law, Ann Milligan, his brothers-in-law, Mike McLenagan, Peter Milligan, Mark Milligan, sister-in-law Liz Milligan, and nieces and nephews (Callie, Erin, Hayley, Devin, Harper, Ava, Maggie, Gabriel, and Luke).

A Celebration of Life will take place at a later date this year.