

R. Max Wideman, PMI Fellow, 1927-2026

A Tribute ¹

R. Max Wideman

January 19, 1927 --- June 14, 2026



Max passed away peacefully on June 14th, in Victoria, BC, at the age of 99. He shared 72 years of hard work and international adventure with his wife Audrey, who passed away just 3 years ago. Max leaves behind his son, Graham, and daughter, Penny (Don).

Max had a long career in Civil Engineering and construction management across three continents. In the 1980's, he achieved some prominence in the field Project Management, developing the early flagship documents of the Project Management Institute, of which he took a turn as president. Speaking engagements followed, affording fascinating foreign travel, with Audrey as eager companion.

At home, Max's workshop was the HQ for hands-on activity, whether home repair, full-scale construction, or a landscaping project to prepare for enthusiastic gardening. He relished recording favorite pieces of classical music, and his long affinity for photography has left a trove of pictorial memories.

His Remembrance and Thanksgiving will be held at 11:00 a.m. on June 25, 2026, at St. Peter and St. Paul's Anglican Church, 1379 Esquimalt Rd, Esquimalt BC V9A 3R4

As we reflect on the great legacy of Max Wideman, I would like to share a few words of appreciation. He was a beloved PMI Fellow, an early leader in the PMI community, and a trailblazer whose impact was deeply rooted in advancing project management knowledge.

We are honoring Max's memory by sharing his milestones and contributions on the PMI.org [In Memoriam page](#) starting on 2 July. Here are just a few of them:

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- Max was active in the PMI Community since 1974. His leadership included roles as founding President of the PMI Canadian West Coast Chapter (1979), President of PMI (1987), and Chair of the PMI Board of Directors (1988).
- He led a team of PMI Volunteers to create the first edition of *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*.
- In addition to being named a PMI Fellow (1989), he was also PMI Person of the Year (1986) and won PMI Distinguished Contribution (1985). He was also a Fellow for the Institution of Civil Engineers, UK (1969) and Engineering Institute of Canada (1977).
- The Wideman Education Foundation (WEF) promotes sound project management principles and skills among young people, in Max's honor.

To continue his legacy, the 2027 PMI Fellows Scholarship will be named in Max's honor. He was a pillar of PMI, and his contributions helped shape the profession and global community we are today.

Pierre Le Manh, PMP
President and CEO
Project Management Institute

Memories and Tributes from Friends and Colleagues around the World

“Max was indeed the guy with the glossary. It is how he was introduced to me when I first met him. When I was on the Board we began a correspondence by email. He offered me advice and recommendations. Some were quite good. All were appreciated because Max was able to make you see him smiling as you read his marching orders for you.

We talked at a couple Fellow luncheons when he still attended. We also had a supper with other Fellows (I was not at the time) when the PMI meeting was in Vancouver. He was a delight and his stories were enlightening and always incorporated a lesson.

He was part of my inspiration for pushing for PMI to truly act global. He would say that PMI was missing its true calling and why did we not see it when many individuals from around the world attended the annual meeting. He was so right and Stephen Harrison and I took it as an initiative with Stephen leading the way.

The past few years the emails slowed, but he always let me know he got my Christmas card. It was who he was. He recognized people and valued them.”

Rebecca A. Winston (Becky) , JD

Fellow, Former Chair, PMI

Idaho, USA

“Max has left a footprint on the project management profession that will not be forgotten. His early and continued contributions to PMI and thought leadership were immense. I have been energized by every chance I had dialogues with Max. I also attribute my passion for and expertise in risk management to the learnings and best practices that he shared with the world. Thank you, Max, for being an outstanding human being with a wonderful legacy and impact.”

Dr. Al Zeitoun, PgMP, PMI Fellow

Maryland, USA

“I never met Max, but he is one of the gurus whose work and publications influenced my development as a project manager. His major contribution, to my mind, was the codification of our learning which eventually became PMBOK.

You will know far better than me the Summer editions of PM Quarterly where PMI developed their view of PM processes. Max played a critical part in these early (1984 – 87 if memory serves) efforts to codify our occupational knowledge. He recognised early on that if Project Managers wished to be seen as professionals, the underlying knowledge needed to be made visible. Of course there were other factors at play, but his interest seemed to be focused on improving project delivery as well as recognition of PM as an important dimension of management, with significant impact on society.

His paper in the International Journal of Project Management special issue on Bodies of Knowledge (Vol 13 No 2 pp 71 – 75) was especially interesting for association agnostic practitioners – and pointed the way for international development of Bodies of Knowledge.”

A good man who will be sorely missed.”

Very best regards,

Miles Shepherd, HonFAPM

Executive Editor, Hon Advisor, PMWJ

Salisbury, UK

“Max Wideman was a mentor to me and stayed abreast of what was being done for the project management community. Before I joined PMI in the 1980s, I had worked with foundations in DC and NY for a huge project (building college campuses in federal agencies). So I had considered a career developing a foundation to raise money for needed causes, promoting broader support for big goals. When Max announced that PMI wanted to create a foundation, I pounced on it. I was the first volunteer (and one of the first women in our chapters). I recommended creating the foundation in DC where other foundations existed for better credibility. Then we developed a cadre of Fellows to envision the goals and purposes, separating it from the business of the association and creating broader audiences. Max was directly involved, and over ten years we fleshed out the logo, motto, potential board members, causes, etc. He took little credit for his sponsor role but the PMI Educational Foundation would not have happened without him. As its first elected officer together with Jim Snyder in 2000, I want to thank Max for creating what has now become a critical organization in PMI's presence globally. Thank you, Max Wideman, for your vision, tenacity, and inspiration.”

Helen Cooke, PMI Fellow

Chicago, Illinois, USA

“Max was a true leader and complete professional. As you referenced he provided sage advice and input not only to me as well as many others over several decades.

PMI and the project management profession are indebted to Max. He led us to what is now recognized globally as the golden standard of project management, but he was so much more. I worry that we will may not ever truly appreciate all that Max did.”

Fred Arnold, PMP, PMI Fellow

Butler, Pennsylvania, USA

Max was an inspiration and encouragement to me as I was becoming established in the risk management field in the mid-1980s. We had frequent discussions, including about his seminal book “*Project & Program Risk Management – A guide to managing project risks & opportunities*”, published by PMI in 1992, as well as the Project Risk Management knowledge area in the initial PMBOK Guide. My own contributions to risk management and to the PMBOK Guide built on the foundations Max provided, and he was always very positive about my work, particularly the emphasis on treating risk as a double-sided concept that includes both threats and opportunities.

He will be missed, but his legacy lives on.

With my sympathy to Max's family,

Dr David Hillson,
The Risk Doctor, PMI Fellow, HonFAPM
United Kingdom

Thanks for letting me know. Yes, Max was the guy who introduced me to PMI while I was working in Alaska and served as my mentor for many years. He often published my papers in his blog, and on several occasions, we collaborated on mutual topics of interest, specifically on the use and evolution of Meyers-Briggs, and also on several occasions, supporting my efforts to get people to stop using the term Project lifecycle and using the more grammatically correct "Project Life SPAN."

May Max rest in peace and my condolences to Max's family and many friends.

Dr. Paul D. Giammalvo, CDT, CCE, MScPM, MRICS
Senior Technical Advisor, PT Mitrata Citragraha
Jakarta, Indonesia

In Memory of Max Wideman

I first met Max Wideman in 1984 at a PMI Seminar/Symposium in Philadelphia. From that first meeting, I experienced his remarkable generosity and kindness. Max had a unique gift for welcoming newcomers, making them feel valued, and encouraging them to become active members of the PMI community.

Over the years, Max became much more than a respected colleague—he became my mentor, my trusted advisor, and one of my closest friends. We used to meet often in Vancouver. I have visited him many times when he moved to care homes in Vancouver, Richmond Hills, ON and in Victoria, BC. Last time I met max was on May 04/2026 in Victoria and we had an enjoyable conversation about many general topics.

His encouragement, wisdom, and unwavering support had a profound influence on my professional journey. It was through his mentorship that I found the confidence to write my three books on the human aspects of project management, published by PMI in the mid-1990s.

Max's leadership in guiding the development of the first edition of the *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)* shaped our profession for generations. Yet, what I will remember most is not only his extraordinary contributions to project management, but also his humility, generosity, and genuine care for people.

I will always be grateful for his friendship, his mentorship, and the example he set as both a leader and a human being. His legacy will continue to inspire me and countless others for years to come.

Vijay Verma

Vancouver, BC, Canada

Max was one of the most influential people that I knew in PMI and in project management in general. His early work with and for PMI has been mentioned by others; for me, he was also a personal friend and colleague. I think we met in 1987 at a regional PMI conference in Seattle, then again the following year in Vancouver. Even then he was enormously influential as PMI's president then chair of the board. He encouraged me and many other young PMI volunteers to do more, bring our knowledge and experience to PMI, share with others. We also met at PMI'87 in Milwaukee, my first PMI congress where I represented the Eastern Idaho chapter which received its charter that year. He was president of PMI by then, so I felt special knowing one of PMI's senior leaders.

We met many times since then at various PMI seminars/symposia and conferences. In 1993 he encouraged me to stand for the PMI board of directors, which I did the next year. By then he was already a PMI Fellow and one of the most respected leaders in PMI, and throughout the PMI community in North America. Years later when I started collaborating with the late David Curling at PMForum.org, Max was intimately involved. When I launched the PM World Today eJournal in 2006, I tapped Max to be an honorary global advisor for us, a role he continued for the PM World Journal. We communicated nearly weekly for many years, especially after he created his PM website wideman.com. His independent project management glossary became world famous.

Max contributed many articles and letters to the editor for the PMWT and PMWJ, the last of which was in 2022 which you can find on his author showcase at <https://pmworldlibrary.net/authors/r-max-wideman/>. We communicated before, during and after his move from Vancouver to Toronto to be closer to family. Coincidental with the loss of his wife, he returned to British Columbia, ending up in a retirement

community near Victoria on Vancouver Island. He described it to me as a beautiful place where he could walk near the water. As he continued to age, I lost touch with him. And now he is gone. One of the giants in the project management field and in PMI. I was lucky to know him and to consider him a friend. Rest in peace, Max!

David L. Pells, PMI Fellow, HonFAPM

Managing Editor, *PM World Journal*

Addison, Texas, USA