



Newsroom

Newsroom Menu



Doug Lebda

*Founder, Chairman, and CEO of LendingTree
January 29, 1970 – October 12, 2025*

Doug Lebda,
visionary
entrepreneur,
devoted
husband, proud
father and loving
son, passed
away
unexpectedly in
an ATV accident
at his farm that
he had long



dreamed of owning. It was a project meant to honor his roots and the family values that shaped his life. He was 55.

Born and raised in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, Doug carried with him a deep connection to hard work, humility, and community, principles that would later fuel his success as the founder and CEO of LendingTree. His belief that “There has to be a better way” became both a personal mantra and the foundation upon which he built his company and his life.

Doug founded LendingTree in 1996 after a frustrating experience trying to obtain his first mortgage. He saw a system that was confusing, hazy, and often stacked against the consumer and was determined to fix it. His vision was simple but radical: create a transparent, digital marketplace where lenders compete for consumers’ business, giving people choice, clarity, and confidence in moments that define their lives. Whether it was to buy a home, consolidate debt, plan for the future, or simply to enjoy life, Doug believed that financial services should be readily available and understandable to everyone.

Under Doug’s leadership, LendingTree grew from a small startup into a trusted, national brand that has helped millions of Americans make smarter financial decisions. Over nearly three decades, he built not just a company, but a platform dedicated to empowering financial independence, bridging the gap between technology and trust. LendingTree’s success became a reflection of Doug’s deeper purpose — to help people take control of their financial lives and, in doing so, build stronger families and communities.

Beyond business, Doug’s compassion and philanthropy left a lasting impact. With his loved ones, he established the Lebda Family Foundation. Built on the pillars of upward mobility, financial wellness and innovation and entrepreneurship, the Lebda Family Rural Healthcare Program was its most recent endeavor. Expanding school-based virtual medical care to children in underserved North Carolina communities, the initiative has already helped thousands of students gain access to vital medical care. A reflection of Doug’s belief that opportunity and well-being should never depend on where you live.

In addition to his family's philanthropic endeavors, Doug also served on the board of the Atrium Health Foundation and The Darden School Foundation Board of Trustees. In 2023, he became a minority owner of his favorite childhood team, the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Doug was not only a pioneering entrepreneur but also a passionate educator and mentor. He frequently returned to his alma maters—Bucknell University, where he earned his accounting degree in 1992, and the Darden School of Business at UVA, where he completed his MBA while launching LendingTree. Even as his business grew, he remained committed to engaging with students, encouraging them to approach challenges with creativity, courage, and an entrepreneurial spirit. In the past few years, Doug focused on developing a school of entrepreneurship inspired by the theory of effectuation, a model of entrepreneurial thinking created by Dr. Saras Sarasvathy, whom he greatly admired. This vision reflected his enduring belief that entrepreneurship is a mindset that can be taught - driven by action, resourcefulness, and optimism.

Doug also found joy and purpose in his connection to the earth. His passion for fishing and regenerative farming/gardening represented both a return to his roots and an expression of his enduring desire to build, nurture, and give back in every aspect of his life. Whether mentoring start-up founders, supporting health and education initiatives, or tending to the soil, Doug embodied the spirit of creation and care.

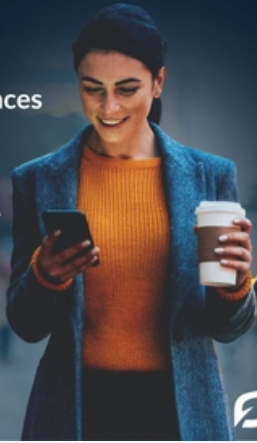
Doug is survived by his loving wife, Megan, with whom he was about to celebrate 10 years of marriage, his beloved daughters, Rachel, Abby, and Sophia, of whom he was deeply committed to and proud of. Whether it was Rachel's latest adventure at sea, Abby's experiences at Clemson or Sophia's success in school, his pride and love was evident in the twinkle in his eye and the smile on his face when he spoke about them. In addition, he's survived by his parents, Bob and Judy (Trutt) Lebda, his sister, Missy Quinlan, her husband Conor, and their children Noah and Dylan.

To his family, friends, and colleagues, Doug's greatest joy in life was seeing and helping others succeed. He will be remembered not only for his brilliance and vision but also for his warmth, humor, humility, and humanity.

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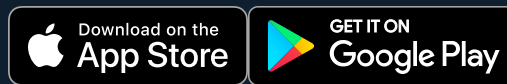
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