



David Roderick Black

March 19, 1938 - December 13, 2024

David Roderick Black, 86, of Maple Grove, Minnesota, passed away on December 13, 2024.

Born March 19, 1938, in Charleston, West Virginia, to Parker Clayton Black and Susanna Reta McCandless Black, David spent his early years in Widen and Clay, West Virginia, before moving to Keyser in 1951. After graduating from Keyser High School in 1957, he attended Potomac State College, earning his Associate's Degree in 1959.

David's path was shaped by his family legacy he had traced back in America to before the Revolutionary War. His father, Parker, was a high school principal who instilled in him a love for education and duty. Yet, it was his sister Helen, a devoted teacher, who most profoundly influenced his character. Alongside her, his brother-in-law James Reed—a brilliant polymath—sparked David's intellectual curiosity. Together, these influences shaped David's values, fueling his passion for history, his country, storytelling, and lifelong learning.

In 1959, David embarked on an extraordinary military career by joining the Naval Aviation Cadet (NAVCAD) program. Commissioned as an officer in 1960, he served with distinction as a U.S. Marine Corps pilot, including two tours in Vietnam. His exceptional skills in the cockpit led him to become an

instructor for the Marine Corps' advanced fighter weapons school, where he trained pilots who would later join the Blue Angels. David earned numerous commendations, including the Joint Service Commendation Medal, Air Medal (1st - 4th awards), and the Vietnam Service Medal with two stars, before retiring as a Major in 1979.

On December 30, 1968, he married Kathleen Isabel Sullivan, with whom he had four sons: Clayton Michael (1969), Colm Seamus (1971), Alexander Roderick (1972), and Kevin Christopher (1976).

David's passion for aviation continued after his military career. As a pilot for Crystal Shamrock Airlines, he transported the 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team before their 1980 olympic win. He went on to fly corporate jets for Gelco, DEI and Arkla, often flying political figures and athletes. David concluded his aviation career training future pilots on Boeing aircraft for ATA Airlines, sharing his love of flight with a new generation.

After retiring, David and Kathleen embraced adventure and the open road, touring the United States in their RV and serving as camp hosts for Army Corps of Engineers campgrounds. They eventually settled in River Falls, Wisconsin, where David found joy in fly fishing and bird hunting with his loyal dog, Stoney. His final years were spent in the Twin Cities, surrounded by the family he cherished so deeply.

Though his children often saw him as a tough-as-nails Marine, David possessed a spirit of curiosity and wonder that he passed down to them. Stationed in Japan and Okinawa, he and Kathleen led his young family on explorations of bustling cities, ancient sites, and natural wonders, including an inspiring journey to Korea. Stateside, David kept the spirit of exploration alive, leading family road trips to Yellowstone, Glacier, Banff, the Appalachians, and countless other landmarks, creating lifelong memories along the way.

Driven by the natural curiosity nurtured in his youth, David never stopped learning. He immersed himself in history, mathematics, and science, and his love for jazz and classical music provided a steady soundtrack to his life. A devout Roman Catholic, he practiced his faith through acts of service, volunteering at food shelves and giving back to his community. Above all, David adored his family-his loving wife Kathleen, whom he called the most beautiful and intelligent woman he had ever met, their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

David is survived by his beloved wife of 55 years, Kathleen (Sullivan), and children: Clayton (Rhonda) Black of St. Paul, MN; Colm (Becky) Black of Minneapolis, MN; Alex (Jennifer) Black of Maple Grove, MN; Kevin (Kelly) Black of Maple Grove, MN and from a previous marriage, his adopted daughter, Seannette Black Meserole and family. His legacy lives on through his grandchildren: Molly Lewis, Seamus Black, Madisen Black, Isabella Black, Noah Black, Finnegan Black, Josephine Black, Katherine Black, Logan Black, and Lauren Black, as well as great-grandchild Thomas Lewis-Manning. He is also survived by brothers-in-law, John Sullivan and Carl Hedberg; sisters-in-law Eileen Hedberg, and Marilyn Sullivan.

David was preceded in death by his parents, Parker and Reta (McCandless) Black; his sisters Anna Lou and Helen Reed; his brother Richard; his father-in-law Michael Sullivan and mother-in-law Susan (Doran) Sullivan; brothers-in-law James Reed, Edward Riley, and Michael Sullivan; sisters-in-law Mary Sue Riley and Susan Sullivan; and nephews James Reed II, Edward Reed, and Thomas Reed.

Semper Fi, David. Your watch is over, but your legacy endures.

Memorial Mass of Christian Burial will take place Friday, January 3, 2025, at 10:30 am at St Therese Parish (18323 Minnetonka Blvd) in Deephaven. Visitation from 9:30 am until the time of Mass at the church. Burial will follow at 1:30 pm at Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis.

If you are unable to attend in person, join the live stream: <https://st-therese.org/live>

Please consider a memorial to a non-profit organization of your choice.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 3. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Church of St. Therese (Deephaven)
18323 Minnetonka Boulevard
Deephaven, MN 55391

Mass of Christian Burial

JAN 3. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

Church of St. Therese (Deephaven)
18323 Minnetonka Boulevard
Deephaven, MN 55391

Graveside Service

JAN 3. 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Fort Snelling National Cemetery
7601 34th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55450

Tribute Wall



“ *The Spindler Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Roderick Black.*

The Spindler Family - January 03, 2025 at 02:51 PM



“ *The Spindler Family purchased the Dreams From the Heart Bouquet for the family of David Roderick Black.*



The Spindler Family - January 03, 2025 at 02:51 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of David Roderick Black.*

December 23, 2024 at 10:27 AM



“ *Pretty Please was purchased for the family of David Roderick Black.*



December 23, 2024 at 10:27 AM