



## David Lyle Phillips

July 14, 1929 - February 19, 2026

David L. Phillips died Thursday, February 19, 2026, at the age of 96, leaving behind a legacy of public service, devotion to family, and quiet integrity that shaped the lives of all who knew him.

David was born July 14, 1929, in Spokane, Washington, and was adopted at birth by Alan A. and Elsie Q. Phillips. They moved to Minnesota so his father, Alan, could be the first divisional merchandise manager for The Dayton Company. David was raised in a loving home alongside his brother, Donald, where the values of kindness, diligence, and steady purpose took root early. He graduated from West High School in 1947 and went on to attend the University of Minnesota, where he earned his law degree in 1959—beginning a long and meaningful legal career in service to the people of Minnesota.

Before entering the legal profession, David answered the call to serve his country. Drafted into the United States Army during the Korean War era, he achieved the rank of Private First Class and served in South Korea in support of engineering operations during a pivotal period in Cold War history. For his dedication, he received the Korean Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and United Nations Service Medal. Though he rarely spoke at length about his military years, his sense of duty and humility remained evident throughout his life.

Following his honorable discharge, David returned to Minnesota to practice law in public service. In 1969, he was appointed Special Assistant Attorney General for the State of Minnesota, beginning decades of legal work on behalf of the state and its citizens. Over the course of his long career, he served under Attorneys General Douglas M. Head, Warren Spannaus, Hubert H. Humphrey III, Mike Hatch, and Lori Swanson. His work focused on real estate, acquisition, and the defense of state interests, including legal responsibilities connected to Minnesota's transportation system. He also served Hennepin County as a Torrens examiner. David approached the law not as a stage for recognition, but as a quiet calling-doing careful, principled work that supported the public good. He retired at age 82.

Beyond his profession, David believed deeply in community, fellowship, and simple joys. He was an active member of Minneapolis Metro Gyro and later the Rotary Club of Edina, where he valued friendship, service, and meaningful conversation. He often shared a piece of advice that guided his own life: If you work really hard and are kind, amazing things will happen.

David loved to travel and created lasting memories on cruises to Alaska, the Caribbean, and Europe. Springtime often found him on Marco Island or along Vanderbilt Beach in Florida-places of warmth and reflection he returned to year after year. Closer to home, he was a lifelong and devoted fan of the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers, especially football. He treasured his season tickets and his membership in the Goal Line Club, faithfully following the team through the decades.

Most of all, David cherished his family. He is survived by his beloved wife, Sandra Phillips; his daughters, Karen Stumpe (Phil) and Katie Clark (Darren); his grandchildren Allison, Marissa, Emma, Alex, Hope, and Lily; and his great-grandchildren Olivia, Vincent, Ruby, and Bennett. He was preceded in death by his parents, Alan and Elsie Phillips, and his brother, Donald.

Those who knew David will remember a gentle, steady presence—a man of quiet humor, strong character, and enduring loyalty. His life was defined not by loud moments, but by faithful ones: service to country, commitment to the law, devotion to family, and kindness in everyday encounters. In these ways, his influence continues.

Memorial donations in David's memory may be made to the Golden Gopher Fund [<https://goldengopherfund.com/giving/what-to-support/index.html>].

The family invites you to help celebrate David's life on Thursday, March 5, 2026. A visitation will be held at the Church of St. Patrick at 10AM with Mass of Christian Burial at 11AM and a lunch to follow.

If you are not able to attend, please join us via livestream: <https://vimeo.com/event/5771792?fl=so&fe=fs>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 5. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Church of St. Patrick of Edina  
6820 St. Patrick's Lane  
Edina, MN 55439

## Mass of Christian Burial

MAR 5. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Church of St. Patrick of Edina  
6820 St. Patrick's Lane  
Edina, MN 55439