



Dr. Philip C. Helland

December 12, 2012

Helland, Dr. Philip Christopher (1920 - 2012) "There were giants in the earth in those days -- the same men became mighty men -- men of renown." Genesis 6:4 Dr. Philip Christopher Helland, founding Chancellor of the Minnesota Community College System, died on December 12, 2012, at Mount Olivet Careview Home in Minneapolis. He was age 92 and died of complications from Alzheimer's disease. Phil was born October 18, 1920, in Govan, Saskatchewan, Canada, the son of Norwegian national Rev. Mikkal E. Helland and Jennie M. (Christianson) Helland. He became a naturalized United States citizen in 1928. Phil attended grade school in Amery, WI; graduated from high school in Luverne, MN in 1937; earned a B.S. degree at Augsburg College in 1942; a Master of Education degree at the University of Minnesota in 1945; and a Doctor of Education degree (Ed.D.) at Teachers College, Columbia University, NY in 1961. He also took graduate courses for two summers at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Phil was an Eagle Scout and worked at summer Boy Scout camps as a lifeguard and counselor. He was elected class president in high school and college, lettered in basketball and football, and was the editor of his college yearbook. He taught physical education at Augsburg College while working on his Masters at the University of Minnesota. Phil taught high school in Elbow Lake, MN and Bagley, MN, and was the high school principal in Wadena, MN (1948-51) and Willmar, MN (1951-53). He spent 1954-57 in Europe as principal of Orleans American High School (France) and Augsburg American High School (Germany) in the U.S.

Army Dependent School System. He returned to Willmar in 1957 to become Superintendent of Schools and the founding president of the Willmar Junior College and Vocational School. The Minnesota Legislature tapped his expertise to organize a new state system of community colleges, and he became the founding Chancellor of the Minnesota Community College System, establishing and operating a system of 18 two-year colleges for 20 years (1964-1983) until his retirement. The system has now been incorporated into MnSCU. Phil had distinguished service in WWII in the Army Air Corps as lead navigator in the 34th Bomb Group stationed in England. He completed 29 missions over Europe in B24's and B17's, sometimes leading as many as 1000 planes to their bombing targets and back to England. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, four air medals, four bronze stars, and commendations from superior officers, ending his service as Captain in 1945. Phil served on the college boards of Augsburg, Golden Valley, St. Benedict's, and Gustavus Adolphus. He also served on the Fairview Hospital Corporate Board, on the founding board of Fairview Ridges Hospital, on the Lawyers' Board of Professional Responsibility, and on church boards at Bethel Lutheran in Willmar, and Prince of Peace in Burnsville. He served on three professional boards: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, State Directors of Community and Junior Colleges, and the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board (ex officio). Phil was named a Distinguished Alumnus of Augsburg College. He has two buildings named for him: the Philip C. Helland Center at Minneapolis Community College, and the Helland Administration Building at Willmar Community College. In retirement, Phil wrote the book, 'Establishment of Public Junior and Community Colleges in Minnesota 1914-1983.' Phil is cited in James Shannon's book, 'Reluctant Dissenter,' as "one of the ablest educational administrators I have ever met." Bishop Shannon was President of St. Thomas College and served on Phil's Board. Al McIntosh, former owner and editor of the Rock County Star Herald, writes about Phil in his book, 'Selected Chaff,' a series of WWII columns. Phil, a longtime resident of Burnsville and Eagan, was an avid reader,

photographer, skier, sailboat racer, a meticulous record keeper, a scrapbook maker, a lover of grand opera, a quoter of poetry, and a devoted husband and father. He could easily dispel anger and irritation with his wry sense of humor. Phil was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Mildred; brother, Jean, and daughters, Mary and Judith. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Ruth (nee Tolman); son, Michael of Minnetonka; brother, Rev. Erling (Dorothy) of Cleveland; sister, Florence Borman (Dennes) of Montevideo; in-laws, Thomas Tolman (Elaine) of Bemidji, Charles Tolman (Charleen) of Bloomington, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins in the U.S., Norway, and Sweden. Memorials are preferred to Augsburg College or Mount Olivet Careview Home. A Memorial Service will be held at 11 AM on Friday, January 4, 2013 at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church, 5025 Knox Avenue, Minneapolis, with a visitation one hour before the service. Burial was in the Tolman family plot at North Star Cemetery in St. Cloud. www.Washburn-McReavy.com Edina Chapel 952-920-3996

Previous Events

Service

JAN 4. 11:00 AM (CT)

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church
5025 Knox Ave S Mpls
Minneapolis, MN 55419

Visitation

JAN 4. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

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5025 Knox Ave S Mpls
Minneapolis, MN 55419