



## Philip "Phil" Thompson Hesli, Jr.

December 18, 1945 - February 15, 2025

Philip "Phil" Thompson Hesli, Jr. of Minneapolis, MN, passed away peacefully on February 15 at the age of 79. He is survived by his daughter Sara Hesli of Darien, CT, and three grandchildren Jay, Philip, and Anne Franzese; daughter Lauren Hesli of Minneapolis, MN; sister Karen Hesli (Jeff Welch) of Ojai, CA; brother David Hesli (Ellyn Harris-Hesli) of Iowa City, IA, and former wife Gretchen (Schwartz) Hesli.

Born December 18, 1945, to Dorothy G. Hesli (Unger) and Philip T. Hesli, Sr., Phil grew up in South Minneapolis on Gladstone and 52nd Street where neighborhood shenanigans were the norm and lifelong friendships made. Phil graduated from Breck School in 1964 and began his freshman year at the University of Minnesota where he was a member of the Chi Psi fraternity. With the escalation of the Vietnam War, Phil was drafted on June 6, 1966, and sent to Ft. Leonard Wood, MO, for basic training.

Officer Candidate School followed and in the spring of 1968 Phil's unit flew from Ft. Carson, CO, and landed at the Da Nang Air Base where they waited for the rest of the "Red Diamonds." The 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) had been dispatched to South Vietnam that year to defend the Vietnamese Demilitarized Zone in northern Quang Tri Province.

On September 4, 1968, while serving as Platoon Leader of the Second

Platoon, 1st Battalion, 61st Infantry, Phil's platoon came under heavy enemy rocket fire killing members of his crew and seriously wounding him. Phil refused evacuation, took command of his company and coordinated relief for his unit for which he later earned a Purple Heart and Silver Star.

Following his military service, Phil joined his father's car dealership, Arrow Pontiac, on University Avenue in St. Paul, becoming the third generation of Phil Heslis in the car business. His outgoing nature and interest in others led to a long career with many happy customers.

Phil liked all things history, especially family history, and could recall names, dates and the family tree with ease. His favorite pastime was duck and pheasant hunting with his beloved dog Maddie.

Though good health wasn't always on his side, Phil's famous words were "it will all work out." Phil was a survivor, a generous father, and a loyal friend.

Celebration of life Thursday, May 8 with visitation at 9:30 am, service at 10:30 am, and luncheon to follow at Washburn-McReavy Edina Chapel, 5000 West 50th Street and Highway 100. Burial at 2 pm, Fort Snelling National Cemetery, Assembly Area 2, 7601 34th Avenue South.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Disabled American Veterans or Pheasants Forever.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 8. 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM (CT)

Edina Chapel  
5000 West 50th & Highway 100  
Edina, MN 55436

## Memorial Service

MAY 8. 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM (CT)

Edina Chapel  
5000 West 50th & Highway 100  
Edina, MN 55436

# Tribute Wall

DP

“ I first met Phil in 1990 at McCarthy Cadillac in 1990, his dry humor and quick wit were evident from the start, early on I looked forward to Monday mornings, Phil at his desk shining his shoes using 2 day old coffee, cigarette dangling, asking me questions about the weekend, sales training lunches at Red Lobster, a martini ( not me ) and sales strategy scribbled on bar napkins for me to learn, pizza at the original Red Savoys in St. Paul and golf at the U of M where he would rather hook a drive out of bounds than play that GD slice to the right...truly 1of a kind and I was lucky to have known him...  
David Pates

David Pates - May 08, 2025 at 11:46 PM

DP

P.S. my wife always thought he was handsome 😊

David Pates - May 08, 2025 at 11:49 PM

GC

“ To my old and dear friend- you'll always be in my thoughts and heart, continuing to bring a smile to my face. Rest 🙏

Gregory Clark - May 05, 2025 at 02:08 PM

JM

“ In loving memory of Phil, who touched the lives of countless people with his compassion, kindness, and selflessness.  
I will miss hunting, lunches at VFW, and talking about our daughters.  
Goodbye for now Phil.  
May God be with you.  
John Murlowski

John Murlowski - February 20, 2025 at 03:58 PM

GC

“ I first met Phil while working at Wally McCarthy Cadillac in Roseville, Minnesota in 1992.

We became friends over the years and shared many Pheasant hunting trips out in Western Minnesota .

He also took me to his favorite duck hunting preserve. The fellow that owned the place also raised Trumpeter Swans. He told us a story about flying to Alaska in the 60's to retrieve unhatched eggs and brought them back to Minnesota where they were put into an incubation program. This helped save this bird from extinction.

Phil was a conservationist at heart.

He will be missed however never duplicated... Fair winds and following seas my friend.....

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**Gordon S Campbell** - February 19, 2025 at 09:41 PM