

Philip C Curtis Jr.

March 06, 1928 - December 19, 2016

Phil Curtis passed away peacefully December 19, 2016, at home and surrounded by family, from the cumulative effects of Parkinson's disease. He was 88. Phil was a man of many passions and deep interests. He embraced life fully, pursuing the things he loved and bringing the people he loved along with him. He was a role model and mentor for all who knew him. His survivors – his wife of 66 years, Dorothy Smith Curtis, his five children, Philip Curtis III, Anne Knapp, Peter Curtis, Marion Usselman and Alan Curtis, and their spouses, his ten grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, his large extended family, including siblings Myron Curtis and Janet Green and scores of friends and colleagues – will miss his ingenuity, curiosity, optimism, wise counsel and unwavering loyalty and generosity. He is preceded in death by his grandson Spec. Jonathan Michael Curtis.

Phil was born in Providence, RI, on March 6, 1928, the eldest son of Philip and Marion Curtis. He graduated from Pawtucket High School in 1945 and entered Brown University where, after a brief tour in the Army, he earned a BA in Mathematics in 1950. A Fulbright Scholarship in Amsterdam followed and then entry into Yale University where Phil completed his Ph.D. in Mathematics in 1955. Phil joined the UCLA Mathematics Department in 1955 where he remained as a Professor for over 50 years. Phil was known for his pioneering theoretical work in the Banach Algebras, as an influential member of the University of California's Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools, a founder of the UC's Mathematics Diagnostic Testing Project, and a leading advocate for improving mathematics education in secondary schools. The UCLA Philip C. Curtis Jr. Center for Mathematics and Teaching was named in his honor. Phil had an abiding love of opera, classical music, fine wine, trains, history, travel, hiking, cross-country skiing and organizing and leading adventures of all kinds. He was devoted to his wife, his family and his friends.

Written by the Curtis family