



William Patrick Phenix

August 17, 1930 - December 16, 2017

William Patrick Phenix passed away suddenly on December 16, 2017, after a brief illness. He leaves behind his wife of 61 years, Patricia, his son William (Jane) and daughter Peggy (James). He was grandfather to Katharine, Erin and Madeline. His sisters, Alice and Maureen, preceded him in death.

Bill was born in Belfast, Ireland and came to America at age 5. After high school, he joined the Navy and served between WWII and Korea. He attended Eastern Michigan University, where he met his wife, Wayne State University and University of Michigan where he earned a PHD in military history.

Bill eagerly shared his passion for history with all those who were interested, especially his students at Highland Park High School and College where he taught for 30 years.

For the last 12 of those years, he was also Military curator of Historic Fort Wayne in Detroit, helping to create and open the American Indian and the Tuskegee Airmen Museums.

His love of all things Scottish led him to the St. Andrew's Society where he was a long-time member and served two terms as president.

A visitation will be held at Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, 46401 W. Ann Arbor Rd., (between Sheldon & Beck) Plymouth, MI, Saturday, January 20th 10 AM – 12 noon followed by a 12 Noon Memorial Service.

His family requests donations be made to the St. Andrew's Society or the Detroit Historical Society to keep his passions alive.

To share a memory, please use the Share a Memory tab on this web page.

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

JAN **20**. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenfh.com

Memorial Service

JAN **20**. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenfh.com

Tribute Wall



“ *William Patrick Phenix*

December 07, 2023 at 05:11 AM



“ *I never met Dr Phenix. My connection to him was that I temped at a typing service and was assigned his dissertation on British horse soldiers. It was so gracefully written that it raised the bar by which i have judged academic writing ever since ... It can be beautifully written and interesting at the same time. Alas my own dissertation a few years later never touched his level. I have always hoped I would run across a copy of the finished work so I could enjoy it without being distracted by having to maintain a speed of a hundred words per minute. The world is a poorer place without his talent, I am certain.*

christin grant - June 04, 2022 at 11:24 PM

JT

“ In Highland Park High School when we created a tea house I promptly spilled ceremonial tea on the principal's suit. Bill Phenix, with great alacrity and magnanimous as usual quickly cleaned up the offending brew. As a high school senior, I corrected history tests for him and as a Wayne State college student I baby sat for his young son, Billy. He was one of the most brilliant teachers I ever had and one of the most understanding friends. He and his wife even cut their Bermuda vacation short to attend my labor day wedding. I never found a teacher to equal William Phenix for my son throughout his schooling, so I have added the Phenix touch in bits and pieces whenever I could. I'll always be internally grateful for this incredibly wonderful teacher

Joy Lee Taylor (Skiba)

Joy Taylor - January 18, 2018 at 02:42 PM

KK

“ Pat McGivern was one of my favorite teachers at Ford school. I had her the year (6th grade) she got married to Bill Phoenix. We students used to get a chuckle out of watching them in the morning before school started kissing (making out in our minds) in the car from our school windows. Then later I had Mr. Phoenix for a teacher in High School and he was great. Gentle and spoke softly. Good memories of 2 great teachers. Our condolences to your family.
Karen Koby-Olson M.D.

Karen Koby-Olson - January 17, 2018 at 03:05 PM

PB

“ I had Mr. Phenix as my history teacher both at HPHS and HPJC. He made the classes fun and interesting. My favorite memory is of him walking the school halls on St. Patrick's Day tossing an orange in his hand with a smile on his face. He was an inspiring educator!
Patricia Conlan Baker

Patricia Conlan Baker - January 17, 2018 at 10:23 AM

JM

“ *The William the HP Alumni, You will always be a Polar Bear and carry the torch to other past alumni. John Morgan class of 1942*

John Morgan - January 16, 2018 at 09:15 AM

 Juanita Midds

“ *Dear Pat and family. I am so sorry for your loss. I met you both when I was 9 yrs old, at Camp Rankin. At Highland Park High School, I had Bill for 9th grade Social Studies(elective). He was a great teacher, always available to help. He will be missed.*

Juanita Midds - January 16, 2018 at 02:59 AM

CS

“ *My sincere condolences to the Phenix famiy. Although I did not have the privilege of having Mr. Phenix as a teacher it didn't matter.. He will always be a part of HPHS's halls, and everyone there knew him. He leaves a fond memory in the hearts of those he touched and will truly be missed.*

*Catherine Dovlet Schnoes
HPHS class of "62"*

Catherine Schnoes - January 16, 2018 at 01:30 AM



“ *My deepest condolence to Pat and family on the passing of Mr. Phenix. Bill Phenix was an awesome Social Studies teacher at Highland Park High School and was a mentor to many of his students. He and Pat attended our 50th HPHS reunion in 2011; such a blessing. He will be truly missed.*

Judy Blackwell - January 16, 2018 at 12:05 AM

BR

“ *Fond memories of a great teacher at Highland Park High School as his student . Always made history class interesting! Rest in Peace,Bill.*

*Barbara Boughner Randau
Class of 1958*

Barbara Boughner Randau - January 14, 2018 at 03:17 PM

VP

“ *Valerie Panosain lit a candle in memory of William Patrick Phenix*



valerie panosain - January 14, 2018 at 07:05 AM

JM

“ *Thank you Bill Phenix for your work for the St. Andrews Society of Detroit.*

I personally thank you and your family.

John R MacInnis

John MacInnis - January 13, 2018 at 01:36 PM

VP

“ *A gentleman and a scholar who will be truly missed!*

valerie panosain - January 13, 2018 at 11:22 AM

VP

“ *valerie panosain purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of William Patrick Phenix.*



valerie panosain - January 13, 2018 at 11:18 AM