



Philip D. Robbins

November 27, 1940 - November 3, 2020

Dateline: Godfrey, IL

Philip Dale Robbins, 79, of Godfrey, Illinois passed away on Tuesday, November 3rd, 2020. He was born in a tar paper shack to tenant farmers in abject poverty in the farms fields of Illinois on November 27th 1940. His life in education began as a student in a rural, one room school house in Macoupin County near Carlinville, Illinois. Philip graduated from Carlinville High School in 1958, Blackburn College with degree in mathematics in 1964, and earned a master's degree from Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville in 1971. Philip's first job out of college in 1963 was as a mathematics instructor at Western Military Academy which was located in Alton, Illinois. He also served as Athletic Director and was coach of swimming, cross country, and drama at Western. Captain Robbins worked at Western until it closed in 1971. In August of 2020 at the 50th anniversary of the last class at Western, the Western Military Student cadets awarded him honorary promotion to Colonel. After Western closed, he was hired by Alton School District in 1971 as a mathematics teacher. He served as Dean of Students, Department Chairperson, Division Chairperson, Vice Principal and retired in 2002 as Principal of Alton High School after a 39 year career in education and administration. He also served as Chief Negotiator for the Alton Education Association for more than a decade working to improve the pay and working conditions for teachers.

After retirement from Alton Community School District, Phil was elected by the Alton community to serve as a member of the Board of Education for 4 years and was the Madison county Retired Teachers President. He was also elected by the teachers in the State of Illinois to serve as Treasurer, Vice President and President of the Illinois Retired Teachers Association. Philip was a lifetime member of Illinois Education Association and the National Education Association. He was member and President of Godfrey Lions Club and Elder and President of the Consistory of Evangelical United Church of Christ.

In addition to his day job as an educator, he was an entrepreneur starting The Gables restaurant in Grafton, Illinois with 2 other teachers and their families from 1987 to 1993 when it was closed due to the great flood. He also worked independently caneing, rushing, and upholstering furnishings in his basement for decades.

Philip was married to Carolyn Briscoe on June 10th, 1970 in Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania and they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this year. They are parents to Jennifer (Steven) Winson, and Jonathan (Stephani Forsee) Robbins. They have five grandchildren: Brian Pruitt, Lauren Pruitt, Olivia Robbins, Nathan Robbins, and Jaclyn Robbins and two step grandchildren Jessica Winson and Jacob Winson. He has one sister Julia Walden of Hettick, Illinois and extended family.

Philip loved being with his children, grandchildren and family, playing cards, gardening, and meeting with friends. He is loved and will be missed by all.

Philip's funeral will be held on Sunday, November 8th 2020 at Gent's Funeral home from 4-6 pm where drive up viewing for COVID 19 will allow safe viewing. Condolences, memories, and favorite stories about Phil are requested so we can share with his children and grandchildren at www.gentfuneralhome.com. Memorials can be made to the Illinois Retired Teachers

Association Scholarship Fund or Evangelical United Church of Christ. Gent
Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Previous Events

Visitation

NOV 8. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Gent Funeral Home Inc
2409 State Street
Alton, IL 62002
(618) 466-5544
<https://www.gentfuneralhome.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Philip D. Robbins*

January 28, 2023 at 10:19 AM



“ *Philip D. Robbins*

January 28, 2023 at 08:19 AM



“ *For one of the "problem kids" that was sent to Western Military Academy in the 60s, he was one of the few positive influences. He listened, showed concern, and saw through the negative behaviors to see the person behind them. I'm writing about my experiences there and he mentioned.*

Rest in Peace Captain.

Bill McKenzie - June 28, 2021 at 02:09 AM



“ *I am very sad to hear this , he was my favorite teacher. Ron London*

Ron London - November 22, 2020 at 04:09 PM

CD

“ Phil was a kind man, I taught Math in the Special Education Department; he was always available to me for questions and thoughts. He was definitely a mentor to me. My most vivid memory was in later years when I wanted to teach Pre-Algebra to my SPED students. I was cautioned by many friends and teachers that the students would not be able to understand the subject. Phil encouraged me to give it a try! We both decided that my students would be ready for the challenge. Phil sent the books to my classroom and Pre-Algebra began. I was unable to buy the Teachers edition because the book company only accepted that request from Administrators. Phil called the company and ordered the book for me that same day. The next day Phil delivered the book to my classroom with a notation marked paid in full. The first class that passed my Pre-Algebra was a room of 18 boys. They all passed with a grade of 'C' or better. Phil helped check my exam and told me job well done!

One other memory: I had a student who was dieting her senior year. She had been a very big girl who lost 100 pounds. She was measured for her cap and gown after the weight loss. Unfortunately, she gained most of that weight back prior to graduation. Phil knew there would be a problem and took her gown and an additional gown home and enlarged the gown for her. She beamed with pride. Thanks Phil, for all the years that I was able to enjoy your friendship,

Constance Durham - November 09, 2020 at 02:24 PM

LA

“ There is nothing I can say that anyone who knew him doesn't already know. Phil was one of the best humans and educators I've ever had the pleasure of knowing. He was mild at heart and never gave up on anyone. No matter how many times I got sent to his office he never made me feel less than. He never belittled me or made me feel bad. He always was filled with love and hope for all his students and fellow educators. This man was born with very wide wings and tried to take us all under them. If everyone was a little more like Phil then the world would be a much better place. Not only do I remember him as a mentor, he was also my friend. Take those wings and fly high. You were one of a kind and no one could ever replace you.

LaDonna - November 08, 2020 at 08:51 PM



“ Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Philip D. Robbins.



November 08, 2020 at 02:53 PM

KO

“ What a wonderful teacher, role model and friend. My years after graduation from Western I , like many of the alumni of WMA, got to know Capitan Robbins not as a teacher but as the wonderful man and compassionate human being that he was! He will be missed at future reunions but never in our hearts.

Ken Olen - November 08, 2020 at 02:40 PM

DC

“ Mr. Robbins was my principal at AHS when I came back to work after years off raising kids. He was amazing and my favorite throughout my career. Friendly, helpful, and supportive - he was always thinking of the best for students and teachers. My favorite memories are those when I'd go to his office with a new idea for Debate or Public Speaking classes and he was always open and curious. He'd share his wisdom and support and end our conversation with his story of winning a big Debate when he was in school and winning a prized jacket. I loved his humor, intelligence, and passion.

Donnell Campbell - November 08, 2020 at 10:21 AM



“ I knew Capt Robbins from WMA where he taught math and was my cross country coach. He was a man of great humor and could easily shift between mentor and friend. I regret not getting to the reunions over the years as I would have loved to tell him of the deep impact he had on my youth and later as an engineer. My deepest condolences to his family and all he touched in a life very well lived.

Kenneth Taylor - November 08, 2020 at 06:32 AM

LP

“ Phil was my first principal at Alton H.S. I vividly remember my first time going in before school started. I had graduated from AHS 10 years earlier and knew my way around, but he still walked me down to the old band room in the Main and made me feel right back at home again. His door was always open as was his heart, and he had a great sense of humor. I always enjoyed catching up with him at Evangelical's Fish Fry. I loved this guy. May you all feel God's love and peace.

Laura Plummer
Orchestra Director
Alton H.S.

Laura Plummer - November 08, 2020 at 12:08 AM

BH

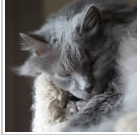
“ I am so happy that Philip lived a fulfilled life and contributed so much good to education and the world in general. Philip, always cheerful and polite, was a classmate at a one-room country school, Carlinville Jr. High, Carlinville High School and Blackburn. Philip was intelligent and a hard worker. May God give comfort to his family.

Beverly Holler - November 07, 2020 at 05:52 PM

 Alan
Funk

“ I had Mr. Robbins as a math teacher at East Jr. Until i had him for a teacher i never enjoyed math, he showed me a new way of looking at things and made math a easier thing for me. I really enjoyed class with him. Thank you Mr. Robbins, you were a great teacher.

Alan Funk - November 07, 2020 at 02:24 PM



“ Although we promoted him to colonel, he will always be Capt. Robbins in my thoughts. He was a great teacher and mentor, able to deal with all those homeless and rowdy teen boys. I enjoyed our conversations at WMA reunions, and am not surprised he went on to greater things. Like so many others, I will, indeed miss him, but realize a part of him continues to surface in my life.

Bruce Weiman WMA '72

R Bruce Weiman - November 07, 2020 at 01:37 PM

RH

“ *Teacher, coach, mentor, roll model and wonderful friend*

Richard Hrastich - November 07, 2020 at 12:58 PM

 Juan Duran

“ *Great person. He was our teacher at Western Military Academy. I was lucky to live for one year in the same floor E barracks 2nd floor 1966. Lear a lor from him as a teacher and mentor. My prayers to his family. Juan Ignacio Duran WMA 68 Monterrey, Mexico*

Juan Duran - November 07, 2020 at 11:38 AM

AT

“ I graduated from AHS in 1996. Movies and tv shows like to paint high school principals as mean, scary and intimidating. That could not have been less true of Mr. Robbins! I remember him as approachable and kind, always with a smile on his face. As a student we often don't believe teachers (and especially principals!) exist outside of the schools four walls. I am so glad to read about what a rich life Mr. Robbins had “off campus”. He touched many lives and the Alton High community was so fortunate to have him as a leader. I am so sorry for the sadness his family must feel saying goodbye. Thank you for sharing him with us.

Anna (Barton) Thomas - November 06, 2020 at 07:55 PM

GH

“ Gary & Linda Hayes purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Philip D. Robbins.



Gary & Linda Hayes - November 06, 2020 at 06:52 PM

JC

“ Phil was always so kind, and such a hard worker. I truly admired him. I am very sorry for your loss! Will be keeping you in my prayers!

Judy Clark - November 06, 2020 at 05:06 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum* was purchased for the family of Philip D. Robbins.



November 06, 2020 at 05:01 PM