



Philip Medearis Higgins

November 13, 1939 - January 25, 2016

Philip M. Higgins, Jr. (76) of Gainesville, VA passed away on January 25, 2016 after a short battle with cancer. Son of the late Philip and Lucille Higgins of Fayetteville, TN, he moved to Virginia in 1978 to be the Executive Director of the Church of Christ Children's Home, later Rainbow Christian Services, a program that provided residential, maternity and adoption services to many in this area. Phil was given a gift from God to listen, love, and guide children and he used it to the fullest extent. In addition to taking care of their physical needs, under his leadership, the children were given many and varied enrichment opportunities. One of the highlights was taking the children to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Phil's second love was travel. After leaving Rainbow, he worked at Manassas Travel Agency which afforded him this opportunity. In recent years, Phil loved his work as a volunteer at MLK Elementary School in Dale City where he continued loving and helping children and faculty. Phil is survived by his brother, Charles Higgins, two sisters Ann Claborn and Elizabeth Clark, numerous nieces and nephews, and his special friend, Suellen Phillips. Visitation will be from 12-2 pm on Friday-January 29, 2016 at Pierce Funeral Home in Manassas followed by a memorial service at 2 pm, officiated by Brother Tommy South. Burial will be in his home town in Tennessee. In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 or Smile Train, PO Box 96231, Washington, DC 20090.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN **29**. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home
9609 Center St.
Manassas, VA 20110
(703) 257-6028
pfh@piercefh.com
<https://www.piercefh.com>

Memorial Service

JAN **29**. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home
9609 Center St.
Manassas, VA 20110
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<https://www.piercefh.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *What a sweet friend he has been to so many over the years!. He will be greatly missed.*

Keith and Melanie Hubbard, Cordell, Oklahoma

Mel N Hubbard - March 07, 2016 at 08:36 AM

JA

“ *I was so sorry to hear of Phil's passing. We lived at the Children's Home in Gainesville as a foster family. Our time there, as well as our many years of keeping up with Phil since then have been a joy. He was such a special person to so many people. He will be missed. God Bless his family and all those whose lives he touched.*

Janice Lee Algie

Janice Lee Algie - March 07, 2016 at 08:02 AM



“ *Our love, thoughts & prayers go to the Higgins family & everyone who knew Phil in this time of loss. In the loving memory of my Uncle Phil; a man who not only loved & had a passion for caring for others, but dedicated his life to it. Your presence touched so many lives including my Father's & my own, your impact has created a legacy that will live on in each of them. May you enjoy your second love of travel as you are now on the ultimate adventure.*



Daniel & Jennifer Barbee

Jennifer Barbee - February 04, 2016 at 11:26 PM

NJ

“ my name is Nancy Johnson my brother forest lyles and I lived at rainbow Christian children's home as young children I was 5 wen we arrived. we enjoyed our time there an always kept in touch with Phil thru out our years of growing up phil was such a great an loving man my condolence goes out to his family an friends ima miss him dearly. he loved everyone.

nancy Johnson/lyles - January 31, 2016 at 10:38 PM

JL

“ All of Phil's cousins (children of his Aunt Margaret) want to let the Higgins family know we have you in our hearts and prayers at this sad time. We all remember our cousin as a very kind and caring person. Please know his Aunt Margaret loved him very much. In loving memory, Aunt Margaret and Family.

Jessie Mize Long - January 31, 2016 at 12:11 PM

AN

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you in the loss of your brother, uncle, cousin. We knew Phil at Lipscomb and later reconnected when we both moved to Manassas, VA. We always enjoyed being in his presence and so admired and appreciated the way he worked with the children at Rainbow. Rest in peace, sweet friend.

God bless and give you His peace and comfort.

*John T. and Ann Smithson
Chattanooga, TN*

Ann - January 29, 2016 at 10:30 PM

MA

“ I once heard Maya Angelou say that your children should see your face light up whenever you see them enter the room. Phil demonstrated that--not only for children but for everyone. His smile and twinkling eyes formed an expression of pure delight. He listened intently to every word. He seldom spoke of himself as he was always focused on others. Those in his presence felt special and important.

Phil devoted his life to children, particularly those growing up under difficult circumstances. His goal was to make every child or young person feel safe and loved and valued. A former resident of Rainbow Village recently said of Phil, "He was so good to us. I always knew someone loved me, no matter what happened." He touched the lives of more kids than we can count and his positive influence impacted not only those he knew personally, but will be seen in generations to come.

Phil was a true Southern gentleman. He held the door open as others entered, opened car doors, served others before himself--again always putting others first.

I'm thankful that our paths crossed, and for all the ways in which I've been blessed because of him. I'm grateful for Phil Higgins and grateful to him.

In the words of the poet, Langston Hughes--

*"I loved my friend
He went away from me
There's nothing more to say
The poem ends,
Soft as it began--
I loved my friend."*

Mary Ann Adams

Mary Ann Adams - January 29, 2016 at 05:14 PM

NW

Mary Ann, I knew this was yours before I scrolled down. The first part about Phil's reaction when you saw him is one of my best memories of him. He did so much good in the lives of so many children and their adults, indeed, in all those who knew him. God let him come home to rest. Nita Wilson

nita wilson - March 25, 2016 at 09:09 AM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Philip Medearis Higgins.*



January 28, 2016 at 09:40 PM

CB

“ *Carolyn and Jim Bingham purchased the Fairest of All for the family of Philip Medearis Higgins.*



Carolyn and Jim Bingham - January 28, 2016 at 08:42 PM

EM

“ *Mr. Higgins was my favorite patient at the cancer center. I work at the center and would always look forward to seeing him. His bright smile and warm personality was so admirable during his fight with cancer. He never complained and if anything always said "other's have it so much worse than I do". His selflessness and compassion made him so unique. He was so genuine and he had a special energy about him you could feel as soon as he walked into a room. It broke my heart to learn Mr. Higgins has passed but I am sure he is in such a good place watching over his granddaughters whom he loved and was always talking about. In the short span I knew Mr. Higgins he truly touched my life in such a positive way.*

-Ely Molina

Ely Molina - January 28, 2016 at 07:51 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Philip Medearis Higgins.*



January 28, 2016 at 12:39 PM



“ *Your Light Shines was purchased for the family of Philip Medearis Higgins.*



January 28, 2016 at 10:40 AM

JW

“ There are no words to truly explain how much Phil's friendship has enriched my life. His bright smile and twinkling eyes, quiet humor and sound advice were always been appreciated. Watching him with the students at King ES always was a time to watch and learn. He led by example and made any day he was at school better for having been there. Phil was a true gentleman and reminded us that all the children had special gifts, Phill Higgins will be missed.

Jolene Weigel

Bookkeeper

MLKing ES

Jolene Weigel - January 27, 2016 at 07:38 PM

PL

“ Mr Higgins will be missed by the students and staff at King Elementary School. He always was able to bring a smile to me, the students and other staff members when he was in the building. I feel very lucky to have met Phil. I remember how happy he was when he worked with the students at King. One time he ran it on a king student while at national harbor. I remember Phil telling me how the student was so excited to see him that her felt like a rock star! Little did he realize, he was a rock star to many.

Pam Lansberry

Pam Lansberry - January 27, 2016 at 01:34 PM

RK

“ Mr. Higgins was an amazing and inspiring man. I first met him when he volunteered in my classroom at King Elementary. He was always ready and willing to help in any way he could. As soon as he walked into the classroom, the students were so excited that they would run over and give him hugs. Years went by and even though Mr. Higgins no longer regularly volunteered in my classroom, he always stopped by to say hello and see if there was anything he could do for me whenever he was at King. He even made special trips to school if I had a big project or something that I needed help on. I am so grateful for the many hours of work he saved me. Additionally, he was so very kind and patient with the students. They truly loved him and loved seeing him whenever they picked out books from the King Cub Readers. His dedication to our school and helping teachers and students was truly something to be admired. I will miss his smile and presence at King Elementary!

Rebecca Kronthal - January 27, 2016 at 11:10 AM

SH

“ Phil , was a kind man in so many way's he knew about my daddy and never judged him nor me and I loved him even more for that ,... I was in the Tennessee Orphans Home and my name is Shelia (Sweeney) Hammac ,... Phil always had a smile on his face a kind words for us and he will be in our hearts forever and we will see him again one day ,.....

Shelia Sweeney Hammac - January 27, 2016 at 10:02 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Philip Medearis Higgins.



January 27, 2016 at 09:04 AM

AL

“ *Mr. Higgins volunteered countless hours at King Elementary School. We have been honored to have him work with our students, as Phil chose us ~ he drove past many schools close to his home to make a difference with the children of the King Community. Mr. Higgins served as the coordinator of the King Cub Readers, where he had the opportunity to interact with every student in our school. He knew many by name, and always had the time to listen and help them. He served as a mentor to students, where he created caring relationships with children to support their learning. Mr. Higgins also volunteered in the front office, where his easy smile welcomed everyone who entered the school. Mr. Higgins was the living definition of kindness, caring and hope! He made a difference for all of us and will be greatly missed.*

*With love from our entire community,
Amy Larsen*

Amy Larsen - January 27, 2016 at 08:13 AM

MW

“ *I hope Phil's family knows how much he meant to so many kids from the "home". He was very much in the Watts' girls lives before we went to the home. Rest peacefully. You will always be remembered.*

Mary Watts

Mary Watts - January 26, 2016 at 02:17 PM

DK

“ *My Last Good-bye, My First Hello*
dell Kent

*Now I am ready to fulfill my earthy mission..
I was born to die.
Before me are my family and friends;
And, I bid you my last good-bye.
Now I am ready to fulfill my eternal mission...
I died to forever live
My new being is bestowed.
I am greeting my God and loved ones\
with my very FIRST "Hello".*

Dell Kent - January 26, 2016 at 01:52 PM

BJ

“ *Phil was such an inspiring, loving person. My name is Brenda Johnson. I lived in the Tennessee Orphans Home. When I got married on January 5, 1973 at the Springhill Church of Christ, Phil gave me away. He will always be special to me and so many others who lived there.*

Brenda Johnson - January 26, 2016 at 01:46 PM

KT

“ Phil was the father I never had, he simply took the time to be a mentor when he didn't have to. I met Phil in 1967 when I was at TN Orphans Home in Spring Hill, TN. I later lived with Phil in Chattanooga for about a year and from these beginnings we had a friendship for almost 50 years. Phil wasn't wealthy and didn't have any kids, but he had more kids that thought of him as Father, Uncle, Friend, Mentor than anyone I have known. We leave a stamp on everthing we touch and Phil definitely left his imprint on me. It was a pleasure knowing him and very hard telling him goodbye last week. I will miss him and look forward to meeting again where we don't have to worry about cancer. Sadly missed, but forever blessed by his life. Clarence "Kirby" Tedder

Kirby Tedder - January 26, 2016 at 01:25 PM

AT

“ We have know Phil since 1968. He was always such a kind an loving man. Not only did he see to our needs at the Orphanage but he showed us what compassion and friendship was. That is not something that was common in our lives. Phil became a life long friend to many of us. He will always be well loved and respected.

There is something surreal about actually saying that last goodbye, that last I love you and that last I will join you soon in the cemetery. Phil you have joined your loved ones and hopefully you will be with them in happy times. In reality you are leaving a void in our hearts that until we can join you we can only try and love with our whole hearts. May you finally Rest in Peace in Gods loving arms. Love The Children Of Tennessee Orphans Home.

*Respectfully
Annie Tedder*

Annie Tedder - January 26, 2016 at 01:24 PM

LK

“ *Mr. Higgins was well loved. I remember him volunteering at King ES. We always had wonderful chats. He loved the school and the children. He was such a caring man. He will be greatly missed.*

Lana Killik - January 26, 2016 at 10:21 AM

KS

“ *Phil has become a special friend to our family over the years. He is a special special person with a loving heart and we will miss him greatly!*

kathy sposa - January 26, 2016 at 10:09 AM

PH

“ Phil was a dear friend and colleague to my late husband. He was there when Don suffered through those long last years of chemo and radiation and he could always help Don to laugh. He was a precious friend. After Don went home to heaven Uncle Phil became a trusted friend to provide fun and a confidant to mine and Don's children. In more recent years this dear friend became Uncle to my first granddaughter. Three generations of an adopted family that Uncle Phil has blessed, loved, and became a surrogate to, and who, just like he did for Don, brought laughter to each of us. We miss him already, and we stand in awe of this dear man who possessed a deep capacity of love and concern for countless numbers of others, most especially the weak and abused children that he served so well.

He loved his family and was quick share how his siblings loved him which was expressed in the time you spent with him recently caring for and comforting him. Such a testimony to others.

Bless you dear ones as you grieve your loss and as you rejoice in knowing that he is in heaven and knowing that he sees Jesus face-to-face. And as my daughter just pointed out that Uncle Phil is conversing with her dad. Phil's friend, Don.

I'm praying for each of you.

Patti

Patti Hummel - January 26, 2016 at 10:06 AM