



## Philip Dean Miller

September 25, 1943 - October 5, 2025

Philip D. "Phil" Miller of Holland, Michigan, passed away peacefully at the age of 82 on October 5, 2025, from cancer. He was as efficient in death as he was in life, passing just five days after his diagnosis and three days in a hospice facility, where he was surrounded by his wife, children, and grandchildren, with no regrets and a life fully lived.

Phil was born September 25, 1943, to Howard and Martha Miller of Zeeland. He was the last of three children, following his brother Jack and his sister Connie. He was, by all accounts, an active child, always on the prowl for adventure or mischief. He was also a hard worker, working since age 10 for Howard Miller Clock Company, first mowing their lawn and then working in different departments of the company after school and during summers starting at the age of 14.

Phil graduated from Zeeland High School in 1961, then Hope College in 1965, including a summer spent in New York as a stock runner on Wall Street. He received his MBA from the University of Michigan in 1966. After business school, he joined Howard Miller Clock Company full-time and remained there until his retirement in 2008. Phil and his brother Jack managed Howard Miller for many years, diversifying the company, acquiring international affiliates, and growing it into the largest clock company in the world. Phil also served on the boards of several other companies, including ODL in Zeeland, and as

chairman of the International Housewares Association.

Though Phil took great pleasure and pride in growing and managing a business, his greatest passions were his family and service to others. Phil met the love of his life, Nancy Sonneveldt, through a co-worker who happened to be Nancy's cousin. It was, in the view of most, an unlikely pairing between Phil, an exuberant and extroverted businessman, and Nancy, who was a college professor with a Ph.D. in American literature, three years older, and every bit as reserved as Phil was outgoing. Even Nancy had her doubts, as she declined a date three times before a persistent Phil convinced her to go out to dinner with him. Eventually, he won her over, and "Clock and Doc", as they were known by their friends, wed in January of 1970 and formed a remarkable partnership for the next 55 years. Nancy was the greatest source of Phil's joy and the object of his deepest affection and respect. Last week, from his hospice bed, Phil declared Nancy as "beautiful as she had ever been." After Nancy, Phil's greatest joy was his family: three children and their spouses - Christopher (Amanda) Miller of Oak Park, IL, Derek (Sunmee) Miller of Washington DC, and Melinda (Christopher Cochran) Miller of Holland, and four grandchildren (Anna, Philip, Esther, and Collin) - to whom he taught the values of family, generosity, and service through example.

Deeply motivated by his Christian faith, Phil was committed to philanthropy, service, and community work. Throughout his lifetime, he volunteered his time and talents to many organizations in the West Michigan community, including serving as Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Hope College, the board of directors of Bethany Christian Services, and as elder, deacon, and vice-president of Christ Memorial Church, his spiritual home for over 50 years. In retirement, he remade himself with new service projects, including several terms on the Board of Public Works and working to revitalize housing in Holland with organizations like Jubilee Ministries and Homecor.

Phil had the rare ability to engage and connect with anyone. He was often described as "charming", but behind the charm was genuine curiosity and interest. Phil could see the best in people, and was always quick to offer advice, share wisdom, and give sincere compliments and jovial affirmations that will be missed.

A memorial service for Phil is planned for 11:00am Friday, October 10, at Christ Memorial Church, 595 Graafschap Road, Holland. Dr. Felix Theonugraha will officiate. Visitation is scheduled for 5:00-7:00pm Thursday, October 9 at Langeland-Sterenbergh Funeral Home, 315 E 16th St., Holland. The Miller family asks that rather than sending flowers or a donation in his name, that those wishing to honor Phil pay it forward with time or resources to a local organization that is meaningful to them. Condolences may be left online at [www.langelandsterenbergh.com](http://www.langelandsterenbergh.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT **9**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Langeland-Sterenbergh Funeral Home  
315 E 16th St  
Holland, MI 49423-4213

## Memorial Service

OCT **10**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Christ Memorial Church  
595 Graafschap Rd  
Holland, MI 49423

# Tribute Wall



“ *Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes created a Philip Miller Memorial Service in memory of Philip Dean Miller*



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**Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes** - October 13, 2025 at 01:49 PM

HM

“ *Dear Derek, Sunmee, Philip, and all who loved Phil — our heart is with you in this time of sorrow. Though his passing came far too soon, may the warmth of Phil’s love and the kindness he shared live on in your memories and bring comfort in the days ahead.*  
*Sincerely,*  
*Your friends at Mary’s Center*

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**Heather Morgan** - October 12, 2025 at 03:24 PM

TB

“ *Shocked and saddened to learn of Phil’s passing. Ming Bee and I have many wonderful memories of both Phil and Nancy. Both have been the very definition of “friend”. Phil was intrepid and as such was a positive example of what a leader needs to be. He always had a kind word and a pleasant smile. We will miss him so much; in fact, this town will not be the same without him. But we must follow his example and carry on; not giving in to despair!*  
*Thomas Brouwer and Ming Bee Lo Brouwer*

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**Thomas Brouwer** - October 10, 2025 at 04:07 PM

JF

“ I am so saddened by Phil’s death. He was a high school classmate and we grew up together in Second Reformed Church. He was always kind to everyone and always positive. I was so touched when he called me after my mom died to express his condolences and share a memory. It was obvious he cared about the people in his life. You will all be in my prayers as you learn to navigate life without him by your side. With love, Jane (Van Dyke) and Nick Fowler.

Jane Hotchkiss Fowler - October 09, 2025 at 08:43 PM

TA

“ The Lakeshore Nonprofit Alliance purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Philip Dean Miller.



The Lakeshore Nonprofit Alliance - October 09, 2025 at 06:43 PM



“ Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of Philip Dean Miller.



October 09, 2025 at 10:06 AM

VS

“ We will miss Phil's kindness and joyful attitude! We have known him since our Hope College days and recently as a neighbor down the hall from us at the Farmstead. Vern will miss his skillful ability to cut up BBQ ribs at dinner, but we know Nancy and their family will miss him in so many ways. We pray God's comfort and peace for the whole Miller family.  
Vern & Carla Sterk

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**Vern & Carla Sterk** - October 08, 2025 at 08:17 PM

RK

“ Deepest sympathy to Nancy and the family. May Gods peace comfort you, His strength keep you going, and memories bring you happy thoughts. Ruth Klungle

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**Ruth Klungle** - October 08, 2025 at 12:40 PM

KM

“ We are deeply grieved to learn of Phil's passing. I, Kathy, came to know Phil when he served on Hope College's Board of Trustees. He was a great man in so many ways, and I came to appreciate his passion for Hope College as well as for the astute leadership he provided in many areas. He was always kind to everyone he encountered, and he will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him. Our deepest condolences and prayers for peace and comfort go out to Nancy and his whole family. May the soul of this Godly man rest in peace.  
Terry and Kathy Mervau

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**Katherine Mervau** - October 08, 2025 at 11:47 AM

GD

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**Graham Duryee** - October 08, 2025 at 09:54 AM

AM

“ *Holland has lost a community giant with the death of Phil Miller. The Holland Community did not know all of the quiet gifts and enthusiasm which Phil provided. He always asked hard questions because he wanted the best for Holland/Zeeland. We will miss his leadership and his laughter. A life well lived!!! Andy and Lois Mulder*

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**Andrew Mulder** - October 08, 2025 at 09:37 AM

ND

“ *Phil served as a board member at Western Theological Seminary for many years. With his financial background, he worked with me on the finance, audit and investment committees. Phil was always prepared and was always ready with a probing question to get at the heart of an issue. Phil was always supportive and encouraging to me during my years in seminary finance. Norm Donkersloot*

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**Norman Donkersloot** - October 08, 2025 at 09:08 AM

SB

“ *Phil was always interested in whomever he was visiting in the kindest way. My condolences to Nancy and his entire family. May beautiful memories comfort you at this difficult time.*

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**Sandy Buller** - October 08, 2025 at 08:44 AM

DS

“ I was the Director of Human Resources at Howard Mille for over 22 years, and Phil was profoundly encouraging and supportive of me in every facet of my work. We shared many meaningful and heartfelt discussions about life, including Phil's deep love for his family and his devotion to God. He put his faith into action in so many ways at work, and his generosity and kindness towards employees were often done in anonymous ways that so characterized Phil's life. He also was generous and supportive of my family, insisting (and paying for) that we have dinner at a landmark restaurant in New York City while we were on vacation. An evening that was the highlight of our entire vacation, thanks to my friend's generosity. I will always cherish and remember what a beautiful and godly man Phil Miller was, and how he made my life - and Howard Miller - much better.

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**Dave Sawyer** - October 08, 2025 at 07:45 AM

DM

“ I was greatly saddened, while on the west coast for two weeks, to learn of my friend Phil's death. Through our many conversations, meetings, and couples dinners I came to know and admire Phil for his larger-than-life enthusiasm, his generosity and philanthropy, his warmth, his humor, his positive spirit, his love for his children, his prosocial values, and--perhaps above all--his kindness. Phil was such an encourager. An evening with Phil, as well as Nancy, always left me feeling uplifted, and inspired.  
To Nancy, Chris, Derek, Mindy, and all who loved him, I can feel your loss. Although we lost him too soon, I pray that good memories of his love and his generous spirit may endure. For sure, you all have "a goodly heritage."

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**David Myers** - October 07, 2025 at 08:24 PM

KD

*Excellent! Well Spoken! Thank you, David!*

**Kathleen Meyer-Van Dyke** - October 11, 2025 at 10:35 PM



“ *Fiery Lily and Rose was purchased for the family of Philip Dean Miller.*



October 07, 2025 at 04:36 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Philip Dean Miller.*



October 07, 2025 at 10:26 AM