



## **James Michael Phillips**

### **Nov 1952 – Oct 2022**

Obituary for James (formerly Jim) Michael Phillips (written by his wife of 50 years):

Born November 18, 1952 in Cheyenne, WY. and died October, 27, 2022 in Vancouver, WA.

He was preceded in death by his father, Harry Phillips, his mother, Thelma Phillips, and his younger brother, Joseph (Joe) Phillips.

James' Celebration of Life service was held Saturday, February 4, 2023 at First Church of Christ, Scientist, Vancouver, WA. From 10:00 to 12:00 with a lunch following. Reminiscences were shared by family members, co-workers, and friends.

When his ashes were picked up from the crematorium, the lady commented, how heavy the box was. My response was: "He was a very big man."

And he was a big man in a more than height. He was generous and loving, and always wanted to help others. He was sometimes referred to as a gentle giant, with a velvet hammer. He knew how to get things done. He brought out and expected the best in others.

When we dated in high school, he told me he wanted to join the Peace Corps. And when in college before we were married, he said "I know where we should go: Kenya. Though neither of us knew anything about Kenya. But 3 years later, after he had completed a Bachelor of Industrial Engineering degree and started on his Master's degree; that is where we were assigned. He had made connections with the Assistant Director for technology with Peace Corps Kenya, told him of his desire to join the Peace Corps and go to Kenya. So they examined his experience and education, and after various possibilities, there was a request made by the President of Kenya (Jomo Kenyatta) for a Peace Corps volunteer to work at National Youth Service (a volunteer organization that built roads for the country) located in Nairobi, to develop a funding scheme for the 200+ road equipment vehicles that were somewhere in the country). In a very short time he was able to locate the road equipment, develop and establish a funding scheme for the use of the equipment, and train a young Kenyan (of a non-majority tribe) to take over the process. And then proceeded to work on projects for various government ministries.

It is rare that couples are accepted into the Peace Corps, as it is often more difficult to place two people with very different backgrounds. As the request for James was from the President, they accepted me as well! I was soon assigned to the top boys secondary school in Kenya, as the first Peace Corps placement of a music teacher in Kenya.

We left the Peace Corps in February of after a year and a half, rather than the usual 2 year service term (James having completed 9 different projects), (I was at the end of my school year), so it seemed to Peace Corps Kenya, appropriate to have us leave then if we chose, as otherwise I would leave in the middle of a school year.

Various Employments:

Stillwater, OK Worked at Swan Hose. He completed his masters degree in Industrial Engineering, and started work on a PHD in industrial engineering. But decided to not finish it. He didn't want to do just research, but he had wanted to teach, and that was somewhat frowned upon. So he took a job with City Service Oil and Gas in Jackson, MS which near the end of his time became part of Occidental Oil and Gas. His original job with City Service was engineering based, but it soon became Information Technology. And from that point on his main career was in IT.

While in MS, we had our first of three daughters: Alexis.

I will share the companies I remember that he worked for. Some I don't remember.

Health and Tennis Fitness, which was then purchased by Bally Fitness, Dearborn, MI.

While in Dearborn, both Bethany and Charity were born.

Chicago, IL (we lived in Skokie-Evanston), The first company, I don't remember, Though they said they were family friendly in the interview, it wasn't. They worked the employees very long hours. A 32 hour day is not a good work environment. He wanted to be part of our daughter's lives. And did not accept another job until they were willing to pay him a lower salary, and allow time off when he thought it was needed. That company, I think was Hamilton Investments, which was later purchased by First Southwest Investments, and because of his high quality of work, they moved us so he could work in Dallas, TX, at which time we lived in Garland, TX. When he was fired for refusing to do something unethical, He worked for several different firms. The last one in TX was a small start up. I don't remember what it was, but I remember that while there he started being called James, rather than Jim. The owner of the company was Peter, and another employee was John, so Peter called him James. He really liked the Biblical implication, so he kept that as his name when we moved.

A long time friend asked James if he would work where he was working (they earlier had had a company together for awhile.) The job, with Bonaville Power Administration, was based in Vancouver, WA, and is a government organization that maintains the power grid in the Pacific Northwest, and did cyber-security. He always had wanted to live near the mountains, and we both loved the ocean. Being half-way between them, it turned out to be the right place for us. Rather than a temporary job as first expected, it was 13 years or so. His last job was the Executive Director for an organization that supported Christian Science Nursing in the Pacific Northwest. It was a much loved position for him. And he provided creative ideas for doing so, even though the organization no longer had a facility building. He worked consistently up through his last day. And as all three daughters, and I have become Christian Science Nurses, we were able to care for him at home.

And often other Christian Science Nurses, knowing I was his wife, comment on the wonderful ideas he implemented.

With much love by his wife of 50 years

Carol Crowder Phillips

I would like to add this with his obituary.

It is where people can find my best selling solo which is of a poem he wrote. It has his words and an audio sample of the music.