



## Paul Edward Phillips

May 14, 1937 - September 14, 2015

### Obituary of Paul Phillips

Paul Edward Phillips of The Villages, Florida died peacefully with his loved ones at his side on September 14, 2015, at age 78. Paul is survived by his loving wife of 22 years, Lorraine Cress Phillips, devoted daughter Deborah Phillips, Deborah's husband, Michael Krimminger, granddaughters Kristin and Lauren Krimminger, stepson Michael Cress and wife Tina Gatto, stepdaughter Diana Cress Bryan and husband Reed Bryan, step grandchildren Kevin and Brian Cress, Timothy and Tommy Bryan, Sophie and Hunter Gatto, siblings Marilyn Cullen, Joan Phillips, Larry Phillips and wife Ronnie, Claudia Peers and husband John Leszewski, and a host of brothers and sisters - in law, nieces, nephews and cousins. Paul's parents, Florence and Richard Phillips and his sister Grace Phillips McGarvey, predeceased him.

Paul was born May 14, 1937 and raised in Queens, New York attending the local catholic school and a public technical high school. At 17, he joined the United States Army and became a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne. This period of military service proved to be a truly formative experience for Paul and for most of his later adult life he was an ardent supporter of veterans through memberships in the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, attendance at veterans events, in particular those celebrating the 82nd Airborne, and numerous charities working on behalf of all veterans and active

military personnel.

Soon after his military service, Paul married Theresa Princi. The birth of their daughter Deborah followed and their lives quickly revolved around their two very large extended families with weekly gatherings focused on food, drink, intense games of poker and pinochle, including marathon weekend and holiday sessions, celebrating birthdays and other life events (of which there seemed always to be one) and just being together. In the good weather, picnics, trips to the Long Island beaches where Paul thoroughly enjoyed swimming and body surfing, vacations in the Catskill Mountains, and car trips along the East Coast were also favorites. Paul's interest in body building as a fitness regime began as a teenager and would serve him well throughout his life. Later, he became known for his ability to beat almost anyone at chess. Paul was much beloved by his in-laws, as he was by all who knew him, for his positive approach to life, an incredible sense of humor, which could be quite deadpan, his sharp mind and his even-tempered and easy-going good nature. Paul was careful not to speak unkindly to others feeling that a hurtful word expressed could never be taken back. In addition to his very close relationships with his siblings, Paul forged deep bonds with his in-laws, particularly with his sister-in law Millie Rooney and brother-in law Joe Rooney, a tie that lasted through their deaths in 1985 and 1998. Paul's spirit would be the key to his success over a devastating illness.

At age 30, Paul was stricken with a neurological disease that stumped some of the country's most esteemed physicians and kept him hospitalized for nearly three years. As the disease progressed to total paralysis, Paul became an inspiration to all as he tenaciously battled to regain any and every bit of function the disease had stolen, weathering each setback (of which there were many) without any bitterness or self-pity, never losing his positive attitude, sense of humor and good nature. Against all odds Paul was able to leave the hospital in a wheel chair, although with severely limited mobility, with

his spirit intact. For the next many years Paul worked tirelessly to regain independence through unrelenting commitment to his physical therapy regime. Even when he was thrown a new challenge, a seizure disorder, he took it in stride. With the help of his wife and a cadre of devoted family members who worked tirelessly on his behalf as they had during the long hospital stay, Paul was able to walk again, regaining sufficient mobility overall to engage in a relatively full life even with limitations others might find difficult. After 28 years of marriage Paul and Theresa divorced.

Paul moved to South Florida where some of his siblings had already migrated. It was there that he met Lorraine and they married in 1993. Paul likewise became beloved by Lorraine's children and extended family. With Lorraine's devotion and diligence, Paul continued to live life as fully as possible. They enjoyed travel by car, plane and boat, alone or with family and friends. He continued to make attendance and full enjoyment of all life events of his children, stepchildren, grandchildren and step-grandchildren, a high priority. He became active in the Men's Association of St. Maurice Church in Fort Lauderdale and for many years Paul and Lorraine's social life, as well as their spiritual life, was centered there. They lived very happily in South Florida until 2010 when they moved to The Villages, where several of Paul's siblings resided. Even though in the last few years it was evident that the toll the disease had taken on his body was making the continuous battle against it a losing one, Paul never lost his indomitable spirit.

Visitation will be held at Beyers Funeral Home, Lady Lake, Florida from 6-8pm, Monday, September 21, 2015. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. Mark the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church in Summerfield, Florida at 10am on Wednesday, September 23, 2015 with Interment at the Florida Veteran's Cemetery at Bushnell, immediately following. In Lieu of flowers, donations may be given to The Wounded Warrior Project,

PO BOX 758517, Topeka, KS 66675.

Online condolences may be left at [www.beyersfuneralhome.com](http://www.beyersfuneralhome.com)

Arrangements entrusted to Beyers Funeral Home and Crematory, Lady Lake,  
FL

# Tribute Wall

SE

“ May the prayers and support of family and friends bring some comfort to you and your family. Deepest Sympathies, Sharon and Ron

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**Sharon and Ron Eilertsen** - September 22, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ I got to know Paul better than my own Father.He NEVER had a bad word to say to anybody.You could always count on him to keep a secret. He truly loved people, all of his family especially my Mother.

*Keep an eye on us from up above.*

*Diana###GESTURE###*

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**Diana Cress Bryan** - September 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

EC

“ My family extends to you our deepest sympathies.###GESTURE###

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**Ed & Lisa Creswell** - September 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ I got to know Paul better than my own Father.He NEVER had a bad word to say to anybody.You could always count on him to keep a secret. He truly loved people, all of his family especially my Mother.  
*Keep an eye on us from up above. Diana*

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**Diana Cress Bryan** - September 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RP

“ As a little kid I remember his generosity when my brother and I would go over to his house on 109st and rake some leaves or do some painting. So much so that when he needed anything we would go running over there to help. I remember him beating the computer at chess and thought he was the smartest man in the world! I remember driving in the car with my mom and him (maybe Marilyn too?) and we got a flat tire along the belt parkway. We all got out of the car and looked at the flat tire - and each other- and Uncle Paul Immediately brought calm to the "crisis" when in a very very calm voice he said "Well we all know I can't change that tire, but I can tell you exactly what we need to do!" He was around a lot when I grew up and I always enjoyed his company as he always took the time to chat with us kids and was interested in what was going on and usually had a good story or two of his own to share. I arrived on the scene after his illness and always felt he got the raw end of the deal because I saw him so active and mobile throughout his life, despite his limitations, that I am sure he would have been still jumping out of planes into his 70's. I am sure he is jumping off of cloud 9 these past few days with his savior! P.S. I never beat him at chess either.

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**Rich Peers** - September 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

CP

“ It is Paul, my brother, my friend, my hero I have to thank for learning some of life's greatest lessons firsthand --His tolerance, acceptance, perseverance, adaptability, fortitude, sense of family and nation and his indomitable spirit and sense of humor. When I often wondered why one person had to go through so much in a lifetime and yet do it with such grace, I could only surmise that he was God's instrument to teach us all the way of a life well lived despite adversity and challenges. His personality, the individual he was, made so many people he touched want to emulate his strength, and some how make time to be there for him, time they didn't even imagine they had to give. He has my undying gratitude. Rest in Peace, Paul

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**Claudia Peers** - September 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM

EC

“ My family extends to you our deepest sympathies.

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**Ed & Lisa Creswell** - September 20, 2015 at 12:00 AM



“ Paul Edward Phillips

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September 18, 2015 at 12:00 AM

RB

“ Our thoughts & prayers are with Lorraine and all of Paul's family.

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**Russ & Sharon Beaulieu** - September 18, 2015 at 12:00 AM

MI

“ Paul Edward Phillips

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**Mike** - September 18, 2015 at 12:00 AM

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“ *Our thoughts & prayers are with Lorraine and all of Paul's family.*  
**###GESTURE###**

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**Russ & Sharon Beaulieu** - September 18, 2015 at 12:00 AM