

Philip John Rovang

January 23, 1946 - June 18, 2025

Philip John Rovang passed away suddenly and peacefully on June 18, 2025, in the presence of his loving wife, Laura.

Born on January 23, 1946, to Marvin and Gladys Rovang of Osage, IA, Phil was the third of four children. Throughout the 79 years of his life, his deep Christian faith informed his life decisions and accomplishments, always guiding his convictions and sense of justice.

Phil lived a life of service to others. He was admired as a man of integrity, humor, and energy, and he was devoted to his family, friends, and community. He built what needed building and he fixed what needed fixing, often with his own hands, in his personal and professional life. Phil was the “family historian” which kept him connected to his roots. He was unceasingly kind, with a gentle and ever-present humor.

Born in Eldora, Iowa, Phil grew up in the northern Iowa town of Osage. His early influences were his family and community, church, his siblings, his father’s work for the Iowa Farm Bureau, and his mother’s exuberance and self-expression in art and music. His grandmother often encouraged him to become a minister; while it would have suited him, he found other ways to live a life of service.

Phil received his bachelor's degree at Iowa State University in history with a plan to become a teacher. Due to the Vietnam War draft, he instead enlisted in the US Air Force, igniting his life-long love of flying. He flew the C-123 Provider out of Da Nang with over 500 sorties, often involving missions of mercy for US soldiers and local inhabitants. Because his squadron was stationed next to the China Beach Orphanage, he saw an opportunity to help, and he organized the men in his squadron to sponsor children and visit the orphanage when they were off duty. Even after the war, he and his wife, Laura, made attempts to continue to help the orphans by writing members of Congress to ensure their safety and to send aid.

After deployment in Vietnam, Philip was stationed at the Air Force bases near Fort Walton Beach, FL and Blytheville, AK. In Blytheville, he concurrently earned his Master of Science in Management from the University of Arkansas. After retiring from active duty, he returned to Iowa State to earn a second Master of Science degree, this time in Urban and Regional Planning.

Phil brought his leadership experience from the Air Force and combined it with his innovative ideas for regulating land usage to his planning career. He was the Director of Planning and Zoning for Scott County in Davenport, IA for 16 years with many accomplishments. One of his proudest achievements was overseeing the development and construction of the beautiful Tourism and Visitor's Center overlooking the Mississippi River at LeClaire, IA. He also developed and implemented a comprehensive plan for future development in unincorporated areas based on soil quality, which limited urban development to areas of poorer quality soil, thus protecting the richest and best farmland in the world from indiscriminate development. This model is still being used by that county and others around Iowa to this day, ensuring that some of the richest soil in the world is still able to be farmed, and not lost to urban sprawl.

Professional moves then took him out east to Westminster, MD, where he

served as the Director of Planning and Development for Carroll County and then back to the Midwest as the Director of Planning, Building, & Development for Lake County, Illinois. He retired in 2010. Under his leadership the county's one-stop-shop permitting and review system was created and implemented at the county's campus in Libertyville, IL.

While living in Davenport, and in addition to his full-time job with Scott County, Phil joined the Iowa National Guard as a support pilot. He flew out of Des Moines, IA, which meant most weekends he commuted 3 hours each way. He retired from the Guard in 1992 as Lieutenant Colonel with 21 years of military experience and over 3300 flying hours in four different aircraft. After moving to Lake County, he joined the Stick & Rudder Flying Club where he could fly a smaller plane in his off-time and took great joy that he could finally take his family on short flights so they could share special moments together.

Phil also went above and beyond helping others in his church and community wherever he lived. While living in Illinois, he served as director and club president of the Lake Villa and the Lakes Area Kiwanis Club and served as an Illinois Regional Lt. Governor. He was a recipient of an Amador Award. As an active church leader and choir member at Wildwood Presbyterian Church, his greatest satisfaction came from mission trips to El Salvador, Haiti and various U.S. communities impacted by natural disasters. In retirement he volunteered at B.J. Hooper Elementary School, Lindenhurst, where he was known as "Mr. Science." He lent his expertise by serving on the Lindenhurst Planning Commission and the Lindenhurst Veterans Memorial Commission.

Spending time and connecting with his family was a great love for Phil and he frequently reached out to share updates over email. He was also a consummate storyteller, inventing whole holidays and fairytales that primarily revolved around his Norwegian ancestry. An avid outdoorsman, his life was

filled with camping, boating, hiking, and gardening. He loved to go jogging and participated in many Bix 7 races in Davenport and local 5Ks. He traveled extensively across the world visiting countries across four continents. He remained a loyal Iowa State Cyclone sports fan and watched as many sporting events as he could. He also enjoyed watching the Cubs and hanging his W flag, listening to music, his men's book club, and "breakfast with the guys."

In 2019, Phil was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. Not content to give in to the disease's neurological progression, he refused to let the diagnosis slow him down. He participated in Micheal J. Fox Foundation research studies and helped organize a Parkinson's Rock-Steady Boxing class at the Hastings Lake Y. He stayed positive and optimistic, even as his health challenges increased in number and severity.

Phil is survived by his wife of 56 years, Laura (Wignall), their three children: Dana Rovang (Timothy Cornell), Chicago, IL, Megan Rovang (Jason Bench), Alamogordo, NM and Alex Rovang, Sedona, AZ, one grandchild, Ronen Cornell, his brother, David (Karen) Rovang, Forest Lake, MN, and two sisters, Julie (Don) Burton, Racine, WI and Mari Rovang (Howard Matheson) Warwick, MA.

A memorial service will be held at Wildwood Presbyterian Church on August 23 with Visitation at 10:00 and Service at 11:00. Final inurnment will occur at Cedar Memorial Cemetery in Cedar Rapids, IA, at a later date.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, memorial gifts be made to the Wildwood Presbyterian Church Adult Mission Fund, The Lake County Veterans' Closet, and The Micheal J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

He was a good man who lived a good life. He has now been called home.

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

AUG **23**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Wildwood Presbyterian Church
18630 W Old Gages Lake Rd
Grayslake, IL 60030

Memorial Service

AUG **23**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Wildwood Presbyterian Church
18630 W Old Gages Lake Rd
Grayslake, IL 60030

Tribute Wall

LI

“ So sorry to hear of Phil's passing! He was a super guy and a great Kiwanian!

Larry Forsberg, Past Governor I-Kiwanis - August 28, 2025 at 12:04 PM

KA

“ So sorry to get the news. Phil and I worked in the command post at the Iowa Air Guard. He was a great American and loyal friend. Salute. Keith Acheson

keith acheson - August 08, 2025 at 04:10 PM

JT

“ I worked with Phil in Lindenhurst for many years where he served on the Plan Commission. He always asked insightful questions and provided valuable feedback on new developments in the Village. He will be missed.

Julie Tappendorf - July 22, 2025 at 05:13 PM

GW

“ I got to know Phil, and Laura, at WPC. Phill and I sang in the choir together. We shared not only a joy of music but also ISU. While attended Iowa State a bit after Phil, we would often celebrate, and commiserate, the sports teams. Thank you Laura for sharing Phil with WPC and especially the choir. God Bless.

Greg Whitacre - July 09, 2025 at 01:33 PM

TH

“ Phil and I grew up in Osage and even though he was a bit older, he always included me when "the guys played ball or whatever". He was my pledge dad at our frat at Iowa State. I was honored to be in he and Laura's wedding.

I already miss his smile and his humor. He was a good friend and better yet, a great person. Rest in Peace, my friend. Until we see each other again.

Terry Allen Hart - July 06, 2025 at 03:50 PM

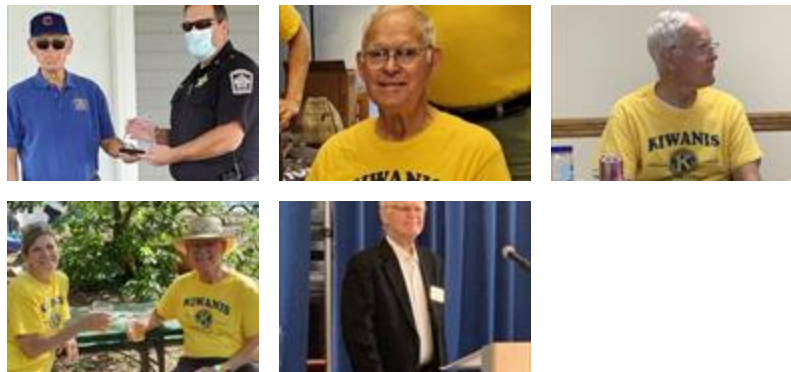
BW

“ Phil was a wonderful man and a treasured friend to me and especially my husband. Phil visited often with my husband during his decline from Parkinson's and both he and Laura were there to comfort me when he passed. That could not have been easy for Phil and shows what kind of man Phil was. He will be greatly missed. My deepest condolences to Laura and all of the family.

Becky Wells - July 03, 2025 at 11:32 AM

LN

“ 5 files added to the album *The Heart of a Kiwanian!*



Lock Nelson - June 30, 2025 at 11:29 PM

DD

“ As a fellow Kiwanian, I have so many fond memories of working side-by-side with Phil.
He was amazing at coming up with creative ideas to energize the club and help the community.
There are almost too many to list: Shop with a Cop, designing the Lindenhurst Kiwanis throw rug, creating Kiwanis Coffee, organizing Jelly Belly fundraisers, Wendy's fundraisers, championing the Kiwanis Community Garden, providing backpacks, calculators and winter clothing to B.J. Hooper students (and tutoring as Mr. Science, of course).
Phil was a problem solver and club ambassador.
Most of all he was a giver in everything he did.
He welcomed me to Kiwanis with when I moved to Lindenhurst 20 years ago and made me a lifelong fan.
I will miss Phil. I already do.

Dennis Dean - June 30, 2025 at 06:16 PM

DG

“ My condolence to Phil's family. Phil was a beautiful soul always thinking of how to help others. He was a fabulous boss always engaging with staff and department events. I would tell him your birthday is on January 23rd and mines is on February 10th and he would have this big smile. Phil was a people person, and a blessing to Lake County.

Debra Geder - June 30, 2025 at 10:56 AM

JD

*Deepest sympathy to Laura, the family and host of his friends. We met Phil and Laura on the beach in Destin FL a number of years ago finding them such a delightful and interesting couple. We would annually cross paths in the same week and always glad to share updates. It's hard to let go of such a lovely man of strength along with gentleness. Sending our sincere thoughts of faith and assurance his salvation is complete. Bless you Laura,
Jan and Larry Davidson*

Jan and Larry Davidson - August 16, 2025 at 03:25 PM