



## Philip Duryea Thacher

June 30, 2014

Age 77, a resident of Albuquerque since 1965, passed away peacefully at home after a 15 year battle with Parkinson's disease. He is survived by his soul mate and loving wife of 51 years, Aija; daughter Nara of Albuquerque; son Jeff and wife Kelly of Fort Worth, TX, and their children Larisa, Kyra, Connor, and Jenna; brother John H. Thacher and wife Caroline of Ojai, CA, and their sons Peter, Sherman, and Tom and their families; brother-in-law Maris Purgailis; and numerous cousins and their families. He was preceded in death by his parents, George and Helena. Phil was born in Palo Alto, CA, on January 13, 1937, and grew up in the Sierra Nevadas, where his father was a civil engineer building dams and tunnels. He graduated from Thacher School (a boarding high school started by his grandfather in Ojai, CA), received his B.S. in physics from CalTech, spent a year in France on a Fulbright Scholarship, and received his Ph.D. in physics from Cornell University, where he met his wife while folkdancing. In 1965, they moved to Albuquerque, where he worked at Sandia National Laboratories for almost 40 years, the last few years as an independent contractor. In addition to English, he also spoke Latvian, French, and Russian, as well as reading German. His interests and activities included folkdancing, camping, hiking, soccer, swimming, horseback riding, CalTech glee club, reading, clarinet, mineralogy, and life-long learning. He was active in Planned Parenthood and Sierra Club, as well as supporting numerous family planning, environmental, educational, health, social, and cultural organizations. Phil will be sorely missed by all who knew him. A

Celebration of Life service will be held Saturday, July 26, at 2:00 p.m. at FRENCH – Westside Chapel, 9300 Golf Course Rd., NW., with reception to follow. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Planned Parenthood of New Mexico (719 San Mateo Blvd, NE, 87108) or New Mexico Parkinson's Disease Coalition (1740 Miracerros PI, NE, 87106).

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

JUL **26**. 2:00 PM (MT)

FRENCH Funerals - Cremations (Golf Course)

9300 Golf Course Rd NW

Albuquerque, NM 87114

(505) 897-0300

<https://www.FrenchFunerals.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ *French Funerals created a Tribute Video in memory of Philip Duryea Thacher*



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**FRENCH Funerals & Cremations** - August 04, 2014 at 10:55 AM

BK

“ *I was a classmate of Phil's at Thacher School. He never said an unkind word about anyone ---- and we all, as we have grown older, now understand that we were in the company of a rare and precious man.*

*Heaven will be all the better for Phil's presence.....*

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**Brewster Knight** - October 22, 2014 at 10:24 PM

BK

“ *Brewster Knight lit a candle in memory of Philip Duryea Thacher*



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**Brewster Knight** - October 22, 2014 at 10:17 PM

NA

“ *Our thoughts, prayers and sincerest condolences to the many family and friends. From everyone at Moses. -Nathan*

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**Nathan** - July 26, 2014 at 02:24 PM

“ *Eulogy to be delivered at the memorial service:*

*My name is Pat Lett. I and my husband Bob have been friends of the Thachers for 47 years. We first met at a Lutheran Church we all attended in the NE Heights. Very soon it became apparent that we had much in common: we were both new to Albuquerque, we were both away from family and friends, and we were both beginning our families.*

*It's interesting how an obituary can tell us things we never knew before even when we have known that person for a long time. Certainly there is much to say about Phil Thacher. However, today I would like to talk about Phil and his family as our friends.*

*When we first met, their daughter, Nara, and our daughter, Karen, were one year old. In 2 more years we each had a son: the Thacher's Jeff and our David. Soon we were sharing holiday meals and other celebrations. The children even went to the same pre-school and early elementary school. We camped, swam, and traveled together.*

*In 2001, just days after the 9/11 tragedy, the 4 of us flew to Maui, where we enjoyed a week at Phil's brother's condo. Another time, we traveled to Lake City, CO, for a week to enjoy the beauty of that area. Even though by that time Phil had been diagnosed with Parkinson's, he was always a part of the fun.*

*We will always remember Phil as a person of great integrity. The causes that were dear to his heart, especially the environment and family planning, were important because he wanted to leave the world a better place for his children and grandchildren. He did all of this without fanfare, never calling attention to himself. It was only when we read his obituary that we fully realized his enormous contributions.*

*When I had a stroke in 1998 and I was in the hospital and then*

*rehab for a couple of months, the Thachers took Bob to dinner once a week without fail. While Bob was overflowing with food that people had brought to the house, it was company he needed the most. They provided that.*

*As Parkinson's began to a toll on his body, Aija always made sure that Phil was engaged in life as much as possible. Even as it became more and more difficult for him to speak, he always heard and understood everything that was being said. Because of Aija's devotion, he continued to live at home, traveled to see Jeff and family and had meals with friends. Nara, has been a tremendous support for both Phil and Aija, as has Jeff who made countless trips from Texas to be with Phil.*

*Phil has left quite a legacy. As Aija said recently, "In so many ways, Phil is still here."*

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**Pat Lett** - July 25, 2014 at 02:09 PM

DP

“ *We want to add our condolences to the Thacher family at their loss of Phil. I worked with Phil at Sandia and always enjoyed our interactions immensely. Phil was a scientist's scientist, able to explain complex physics principles in easy to understand terms, so anyone could understand, even management! I learned so much from Phil, especially how to write technically clear, well documented scientific papers. His editorial prowess was legendary; papers were returned with numerous comments on every page - and all of them improved the paper immensely. Most importantly, Phil was always a gentleman, treating everyone with respect, kindness, and graciousness. My wife and I will always cherish all of our memories of him.*

*Dick and Ellen Pettit*

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**Dick and Ellen Pettit** - July 14, 2014 at 05:56 PM

EF

“ It was my pleasure, and an honor, to work with Phil in the Primary Standards Dept. at Sandia National Laboratory. Phil was a respected institution within the Standards lab. He was a skilled metrologist and ever mindful that his suggestions for improving our measurement capability would have significant effects on our calculations relative to stockpile life and the reliability of our weapons stockpile.

On a personal note, Phil was always helpful and patient in explaining his measurements and for that reason, he was a delight to work with. I had the highest respect for Phil.

My wife and I are keenly disappointed that we will not be able to pay our respects in person at Phil's memorial service, We will be attending a Family Reunion in Salisbury, MD where our daughter has been appointed to direct the Doctoral program in education at Salisbury University.

We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to all the family,

Ed and Agnes Franzak

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**Edmund Franzak** - July 13, 2014 at 03:45 PM