

Benjamin Kimball Phipps Jr.

January 16, 1933 - December 30, 2022

Benjamin Kimball Phipps, Jr., a former US Army artillery captain and a tax attorney educated at the University of Virginia, died on December 30, 2022.

His noted law career spanned six decades.

He was a splendid man.

Ben was born in Boston, Massachusetts to Benjamin Kimball Phipps and Bertha Elizabeth Forsyth on January 16, 1933. The family relocated to Tallahassee when he was four years old and his formative years were spent in the woods of Ivanhoe Plantation, where they settled. His father died shortly thereafter, leaving his mother to raise him alone. His love of nature and plants grew naturally from his time spent at home and on the shores of Lake Hall. He never really understood any man who did not know the names or peculiarities of the flora and fauna on his property. He grew up listening to the stories of the pilots training at Mabry field during World War II, he was an Eagle Scout at age fourteen and was educated at Sewanee Academy in Nashville, Tennessee for a time. He then moved to the prestigious Tabor Academy in Marion, Massachusetts for the remainder of his preparatory schooling. Although accepted at Princeton University, after being taken in by the beauty and history of the University of Virginia, he chose to enroll there. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Commerce before advancing to the University of Virginia School of Law, graduating with honors. He was the managing editor of the Virginia Law Weekly. A member of the Jefferson Circle and the Lawn Society, he was also active in fraternal organizations and

athletics.

After graduation, Ben enlisted in the United States Army Officer Training School. In the Army, he first served as a Lieutenant in the E Special Troops section, being jump qualified. He advanced to the rank of Captain, serving overseas in Korea in 1962-1963 in the First Cavalry Division artillery. He also served as an officer for the Judge Adjutant General. Ben wrote for the Pacific Division of the Stars and Stripes, drafting the obituary for John F. Kennedy for that newspaper. He always recalled his days as an officer with fondness. Some sixty years removed from military service, he could perform the manual at arms with an M1 Garand or calculate the firing solution for any type of battery—rocket or cannon—which he had commanded.

Ben was married to Phyllis Jarrett Anderson, his intellectual equal, in 1962. Two years after the birth of their first daughter, Jarrett, Ben left the Army to be a husband and father and moved his young family back to Tallahassee. In 1965, their second child, Christina was born. He was always extremely proud and supportive of his daughters. He eventually cleared land on Lake Hall and built the home where the girls were raised, naming it Jubilee. As many can attest, he was a gracious host who loved to entertain friends at Jubilee. Ben was admitted to the Florida Bar in 1964 and practiced law, specializing in state and federal taxation, for six decades. He had a reputation as a vigorous and successful litigator and insightful consultant. He was counsel to the House Tax Committee of the Florida Legislature for four years and counsel to the Speaker for an additional two years. During that time, he wrote most of the present statutory language on ad valorem taxes. He later represented the Florida Bar as their lobbyist on local and state tax matters for eight years. He served on the state and Local Tax Committee of the American Bar Association. He was the only lawyer in Florida who held the CMI designation in Property Tax from the Institute of Professionals in Taxation. He held many offices in the Florida Bar tax section and practiced at every level of State and Federal Court in Florida.

In civic life, Ben was a champion of historic conservation, serving on the board

of the Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation and the Florida Heritage Foundation. He was one of the leading citizens of the City and State who fought to preserve the “Old” State Capitol building. He was a charter member of the Tallahassee St. Andrews Society, The Capital Tiger Bay Club, the Florida Economic Club, and the Governor’s Club. He also served as a member of the Maclay School board of trustees, on the Exchange Club of Tallahassee, and for the Florida Bar News/Journal (chairman in 1979-1980). He was twice recognized by the Tallahassee Trust for individual achievement in, and contributions to, historic preservation (1999 and 2022). He served on the board of the Jefferson Grounds Initiative at the University of Virginia and chaired the governance committee that established the by-laws.

Ben and Phyllis lived their days at Jubilee in great solace, commenting that there were few places as nice on earth. He loved German Shepherds and orange cats, he kept both regularly. He loved the camellias that he grew. He enjoyed swimming, canoeing, and rowing his scull across Lake Hall. He suffered tremendously when Christina (2010) and Phyllis (2013) died. Ever stalwart, however, he remained active and engaged in professional and civic life.

Ben met JJ Weston in 2019 and the two were married in 2021 at the Church of the Advent. They travelled to Mexico, tried new foods and drinks, and engaged in the long, deep talks that he loved. She survives him. Ben is also survived by his daughter, Jarrett and by his two sons in law, Lt. Cmdr Gregory L. Crum (Christina Caroline) and Harry Roark James (Lisa Jarrett).

Ben loved to learn. He was an intellectual of the first order and always a gentleman in word and deed, even—and sometimes especially—when engaged in vigorous debate. Brilliant, gregarious, engaging, and a voracious reader, he had an ability to retain any legal, literary, or scientific work he had reviewed. He was adroit in synthesizing the various pieces of knowledge that he had, formulating precise and enlightening positions which he loved to have challenged. He was fond of history and biography, with a keen interest in

military history and great statesmen such as Churchill and Teddy Roosevelt. In 2021, Ben finally fulfilled a lifelong desire. Inspired by those childhood memories of Mabry Field, he took flying lessons and earned his pilot's license. He is missed by his loved ones and friends.

Memorial services to be held at St. John's Episcopal Church, Tallahassee at 2:00 PM on Saturday, January 21st. Gifts in memory of Ben, in lieu of flowers, may be made to the Christina Phipps Foundation, P.O. Box 1351, Tallahassee, Florida 32302 or at the ChristinaPhippsFoundation.com. Todd Wahlquist with Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193, www.bevisfh.com) is assisting the Phipps family with their arrangements.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JAN 21. 2:00 PM (ET)

St. John's Episcopal Church
211 North Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Tribute Wall

CC

“ I was honored to be able to clerk for Ben through law school in the mid 80’s. Although we last spoke in 2018, he was a true friend, always listening, but ready to lend a willing hand, he was full of knowledge and Information and had straightforward keen advice. He was truly one of kind, the type that can’t be replaced or forgotten and the world will miss him, his wit, dry humor, friendship and smile. I will forever be indebted for all that he taught me. Rest in peace, my dear friend, a good and faithful servant. Cynthia Cox

Cynthia “Cindy” Cox - August 06, 2025 at 02:50 AM

NG

“ Jarrett, I am so sorry to learn of your father’s recent passing. I have always thought of Ben as an erudite gentleman of the highest order. I will miss having him in this world, just as I still miss Phyllis. My best thoughts and prayers are with you.

Noanne Gwynn

Noanne Gwynn - January 27, 2023 at 03:29 PM



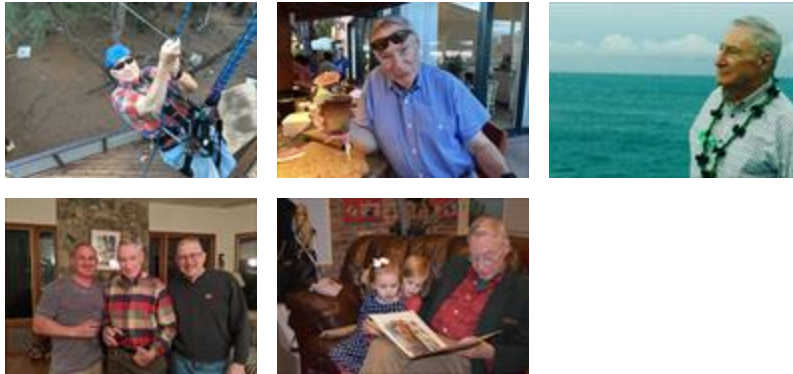
“ 9 files added to the album Ben



Jarrett Phipps - January 06, 2023 at 03:14 PM

JP

“ 7 files added to the album Ben



Jarrett Phipps - January 06, 2023 at 02:59 PM

WM

“ *I served on the Tallahassee Trust board and found him to be both candid and delightful. I'll miss his presence.*

Walt Marder - January 06, 2023 at 02:00 PM

EM

“ *Very sad to hear this. Ben was a great professional friend and supporter of the Florida Airports Council and many airports. He used to meet me in Vero Beach at the Driftwood Inn for a drink (on his tab), where he loved to stay while working and enjoying the ocean breezes (not available in Tallahassee!). I feel like I owe him my more-than-needed (or wanted) knowledge of ad valorem tax law with regard to airports. What a great gentleman and person he was. I will miss him.*

Eric Menger - retired airport manager; consultant

Eric Menger - January 06, 2023 at 01:53 PM

LB

“ He was a true southern gentleman who shared his wisdom and advice freely with all of us who worked with him for so many years, he will be missed.
Les Barnett

Leslie Joel Barnett - January 06, 2023 at 11:52 AM

JM

“ I am truly saddened by the loss of Ben. He was a tremendous gift to the breast cancer community. He founded the Christina Phipps Foundation shortly after Christina's passing and has been instrumental in growing their yoga instructor program that trains experienced yogi's to work with breast cancer survivors. The program has grown tremendously over the years and is reaching into several states other than Florida.

Ben will be missed by many. He was a wonderful human being, gifted in many ways. A quiet sense of humor and always a gentleman.

I feel honored to have known Ben and respected his ability to get things done.

My condolences to Ben's wife and Jarrett. May peace be with you. Rest in peace, dear Ben.

*Jeri Millard, In the Pink
Jacksonville Beach, FL*

Jeri Millard - January 05, 2023 at 06:18 PM

FM

“ I worked with Ben at the Florida House Of Representatives back when Terrell Sessums was Speaker (1973-1974) and Ralph Turlington was Chairman of the Committee on Finance and Taxation. Ralph introduced me to Ben back then as the best tax attorney in the State Of Florida, and he remained just that through the rest of his life. Ben and I remained close friends throughout our lifetimes, and we both lost daughters to the scourge of cancer. We were always there for each other. RIP, my friend...

Frank A Mirabella - January 05, 2023 at 04:29 PM

EM

Very sad to hear this. Ben was a great professional friend and supporter of FAC and many airports. He used to meet me in Vero Beach at the Driftwood Inn for a drink (on his tab), where he loved to stay while working and enjoying the ocean breezes (not available in Tallahassee!). I feel like I owe him my more-than-needed (or wanted) knowledge of ad valorem tax law with regard to airports. What a great gentleman and person he was. I will miss him.

Eric Menger - retired airport manager; consultant

Eric Menger - January 06, 2023 at 01:39 PM