

Philip Rodenhouse

November 4, 1926 - June 4, 2011





Phil's Life Story

A passionate follower of Jesus Christ, Phil Rodenhouse shared his faith openly with others. With a servant's heart and faith as his guide, he spent the majority of his life a very hard working man. It was what he knew, it was in his blood, and it was what he loved. He also knew all too well the meaning of loss, and the importance of hard work and sacrifice. It surely built his character, and his ever present faith and devotion.

Phil's story began on a fall day in 1926, as autumn was making its way toward the colder months of winter in the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The heyday of the Roaring Twenties, it was an exciting time in the U.S. Factory towns flourished, and the eight hour, five day-a-week work week was implemented. It was also an exciting time for John and Clara (Terpstra) Rodenhouse when on November 4, 1926 they welcomed the birth of their son, Philip into their hearts. Born at home on Richmond NW, Phil was the fourth of five children in his family.



His mother, a busy homemaker, lovingly looked after Phil and his siblings, Andy and Marian, who were twins, followed by Florence and then his younger brother, Harold. The onset of the Great Depression left his hard working father, a farmer, struggling to make ends meet. Sadly, Phil experienced the death of his father when he was merely seven years old, only to lose his mother in death a year later when he was eight. It was a tragic time filled with uncertainty for Phil and his siblings as life as they once knew it was forever changed. Although torn apart and raised by various relatives, it was a blessing when as adults they renewed their bond as family.



During Phil's childhood, there was little time for play. Life was all about hard work. He attended Cross School in Marne through the eighth grade, but left his schooling behind to work on the farm. He was no stranger to the demands of farming, and it held true in his adult life, too. Truth be told, he enjoyed farming and loved working with the animals. In particular, he was fond of horses and found enjoyment riding them.

Another pastime he later came to enjoy on his own farm was pheasant hunting.



From early on, faith played a vital role in Phil's life. Although he never played a musical instrument, he did enjoy singing, especially hymns and gospel music. He attended Walker Christian Reformed Church for many years where over time he served as an elder and deacon. As the U.S. was embattled overseas during World War II, Phil





remained stateside, deferred from serving in the military as his service was needed at home working on the farm.

Even though life for Phil was all work, he did find time occasionally for a few social activities. He met his future wife, Eleanor, while ice skating at Richmond Park. Quite smitten, they began dating and later married on August 24, 1949. Eleanor, a city girl, found the transition to farm life difficult but soon had plenty to keep herself busy when they began a family of their own.

In time they welcomed four daughters into their hearts, Shirley, Cathy, Judy and Joan. Phil worked even harder to provide a good life for Eleanor and his girls. His time was undeniably centered around the farm, farm sales and showing his cattle at the Berlin Fair. Wherever Phil went, he loved having his faithful canine companion, Blackie, follow, especially out into the fields each day. When working in the barn or catching a few moments of relaxation, he loved listening to the Detroit Tigers.

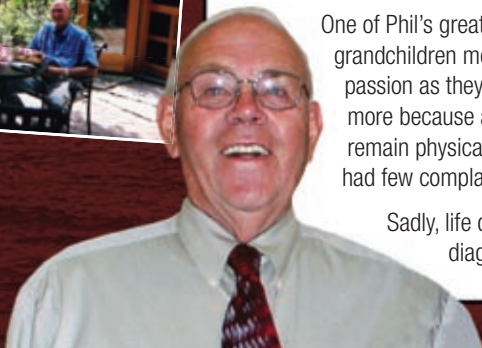
As a family, the intensity of dairy farming left little time to get away. In fact, Eleanor and Phil never even took a real vacation until after he sold his farm cows in 1973. Only then did they enjoy a two week trip to Florida. Sadly, Eleanor passed away the following year in 1974.

In time, life for Phil changed in an exciting new way. While attending a singles gathering, Phil met a lady named Barb who showed him what love was again. As a widow with four sons, they hoped to blend their families together as one when they exchanged vows of marriage on July 29, 1976. Their ceremony took place at Highland Hills Christian Reformed Church, later known as Westend Christian Reformed Church. Phil was grateful for the new blessings in his life. Together they attended church faithfully where he also served as an elder and deacon. With eight children between them, four remained at home.

In the early years of their marriage they lived on the farm but later moved to a home on Lanco NW. They spent enjoyable summers staying at Barb's trailer on Green Lake where they shared many wonderful times. With the farm no longer tying him down, Phil and Barb found the opportunity for travel. They enjoyed taking trips out west and thoroughly enjoyed a special trip to Hawaii. When the last of their children left home, they sold their house and moved to the more carefree lifestyle of condo living on Bona Vista.

One of Phil's greatest loves was his grandchildren, but his great-grandchildren melted his heart. He loved them with the greatest passion as they delighted his days. He could enjoy them all the more because as a gentleman in his 80s, Phil continued to remain physically active. In fact, he remained quite healthy and had few complaints.

Sadly, life quickly changed when on March 21, 2011 Phil was diagnosed with renal cancer which metastasized to his





brain. After spending several weeks in the hospital, his daughter Judy cared for him in her home before he was placed into care at Sheldon Meadows for the remainder of his days. Phil Rodenhouse, at the age of 84, was called to his heavenly home by the God he loved and served so faithfully on Saturday, June 4, 2011.

In the end, "Well done, my good and faithful servant" was all Phil longed to hear from his Lord. Throughout life he girded himself in the love of the Lord and His promises. At times it was all he had, and for that he gave his ever, thankful heart. Thankful also for the blessing of a loving family and wonderful friends, he will be deeply missed, but has now found eternal rest in the arms of his loving Lord. "And all God's people said, "Amen".

Along with his first wife, Eleanor, Phil was preceded in death by his sisters: Florence Van't Hof, Marian Berrevoets; stepson, Steve Goote; great-grandson, Jayden Dornbos. He is survived by Barb, his wife of 35 years; daughters: Shirley (Bern) Dornbos, Cathy Lee, Judy (John) Van Dyke, Joan (Gerald) Miller; stepsons: Jim (Judy) Goote, Tom (Carla) Goote, Tim (Dawn) Goote, step daughter-in-law, Patti (Randy) Van Dam. He was

blessed to have 16 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren who he loved dearly and with whom he enjoyed spending time. He is also survived by his brothers: Andy (Maxine) Rodenhouse, Harold (Jane) Rodenhouse; sisters-in-law and brother-in-law: Bud (Norma) Kleinheksel, Ruth Morren; many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services for Phil will be held Thursday, June 9, 2011, 1:00 PM at Westend Christian Reformed Church, 1015 Westend NW. Friends may meet his family Wednesday, 2-4 and 6-9 PM at Heritage Life Story Funeral Homes-Alt & Shawmut Hills Chapel, 2120 Lake Michigan Drive NW with interment in Rosedale Memorial Park. Memorial contributions may be made to West Side Christian School, 955 Westend NW, 49504 or Mission India, PO Box 141312, Grand Rapids 49514. To leave a memory of Phil and to sign his online guest book, please visit www.lifestorynet.com.



Visit LifeStoryNet.com to connect with your friends and family, share stories, and sign the guestbook. Life Story Funeral Homes® are the exclusive providers of the Life Story Experience™.

Finally, there is a funeral home worth asking for.

