



Philip James Barnes

APR 29, 1945 - JAN 19, 2026



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Dr. Philip J. Barnes, 80, passed away in his beloved Hilo, Hawaii on January 19, 2026. He was born in Indianapolis on April 29, 1945, to William Barnes, Sr. and Cecilia Doyle Barnes, and graduated from Cathedral High School.

Phil was a gentleman and a scholar. A lifelong student in biology and history, Phil earned his bachelor's degree from Purdue University, his master's from Indiana University, and two doctoral degrees from the University of Miami. He was an educator for thirty years, and a founder of the Learning Unlimited program at North Central High School in Indianapolis. Phil later spent more than ten years teaching Hawaiian Studies and was the author of A Concise History of the Hawaiian Islands.

The embodiment of the aloha spirit, Phil was a lifelong warrior for peace and justice, and an advocate for and steward of nature. He was past county chair of the Moku Loa group of the Sierra Club, past Hawaii county chair of the Democratic Party, and a member of the Hawaiian Historical Society. He also supported Down Syndrome of Louisville and the Kindness Warrior Walk, particularly the Will's Walkers team, in honor of his grandson.

Phil's was a life well-lived. He was supremely proud of his daughter Brooke and grandson Will. A world traveler for many years, he and his wife Diane traveled to all seven continents, from an African safari on their honeymoon to trekking in the Himalayas. An avid hiker, birder, and founder of Eco Expeditions, Phil was the best personal tour guide on the Big Island. Happy on the water, he was a long-active paddler for the Kamehameha and Laka canoe clubs. He also loved sports, particularly the Colts, Pacers, and Indiana University; Phil's first act beyond the veil may have been securing IU's national championship and undefeated football season.

Phil is survived by his wife Diane Fournier, of Hilo, HI; daughter Brooke Barnes and grandson Will, of Cincinnati, OH; brothers John Barnes (Kelly) of Verona, WI and Bill Barnes (Lucy) of Sioux Falls, SD; numerous nieces and nephews; and cherished extended family and friends.



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A Celebration of Life will occur at a later date. In lieu of flowers, please donate in Phil's memory to the Audubon Society, at <https://Audubon.org>.



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Philip by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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