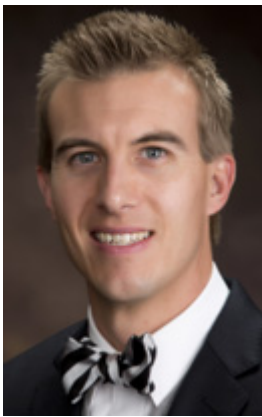


Tribute: Remembering Phil Lineberger

June 12, 2015

[Phil Lineberger](#) loved to laugh. He had an infectious laugh, and you couldn't help but join him in laughter. Growing up, I always knew when my dad was on the phone with his brother Phil, because he laughed the whole time. The kind of laugh that causes your eyes to tear up and your face and stomach muscles to hurt. It wasn't hard to locate Phil in a crowded room; you just had to follow the laughter.



Jon Lineberger Phil loved life, and he loved people. He was magnetic, and after meeting him, you loved him, and he loved you.

Being around Phil was refreshing, because he wasn't arrogant or a self-promoter. Phil was just a down-to-earth guy. He took a sincere and genuine interest in all he met, and you became one of his 10,000 closest friends. Phil got energy from being around and helping others.

As far back as I can remember, not a week has gone by that I haven't been asked by someone, "Are you related to Phil?" When I confirm it, a smile appears on their face, and they begin to laugh and tell me stories about Phil—either a joke he had played (the kind of joke that only Phil could get away with) or how he had helped them; many times it was both.

To Phil, your status didn't matter. He was comfortable talking with the poor or the rich and powerful. On the walls of his office were pictures of Phil with President Carter, President Clinton, President George W. Bush and even evangelist Billy Graham. But underneath the glass on his desk were pictures of the people he held closest to him—his wife, kids, grandkids, siblings, friends and people he'd met and helped on mission trips.

Phil loved his family deeply. He was a great son, brother, husband, father, uncle and grandfather. He especially loved being Papa and telling his grandchildren "Little Papa" stories.

High priority on relationships

Phil placed a high priority on relationships. He valued people over possessions. If someone had a need, whatever it was, Phil wanted to help. Phil was a giver. I know of several instances when Phil used his own money to help people get into a home, buy a car, or get food or clothing. Growing up poor and living in project housing made Phil sensitive to the needs of others.

Phil had a way of bringing people together. Phil taught me you don't always have to agree with people, but you do have to love them. That's one of the many reasons why he was chosen to lead the Baptist General Convention of Texas as president and then later as executive director, a position he turned down. I asked Phil why he declined such a coveted position. He responded that he didn't need it. Phil was humble. He added he didn't want to put his family through the politics, and he said he loved his church in Sugar Land.

Phil loved Jesus and God's word. In grade school, he won a contest with a classmate to see who could read through the Bible first. Phil spent a lot of time reading, as many as six books at once. He was brilliant, gifted and highly intelligent. I don't know of anyone else who has served as a regent

or trustee for three universities.

Phil followed his convictions

Phil was brave, courageous and free in God's grace. He was afraid of no one and often stood up to bullies. Phil didn't care about being popular. He followed his convictions. His bold confidence came from his strong sense of security in his relationship with Jesus and his knowledge of God's word.

Unfortunately, earlier this year, Phil experienced heart complications and began taking medication, which caused him to spiral into a deep depression. Prior to this, Phil never suffered from depression. Although he fought hard with the help of his family and doctors, the depression worsened and killed him.

While we know with assurance Phil is in heaven, losing Phil on earth hurts. It hurts bad. Please continue to pray for his family.

College fund

Phil's death might have hit you hard, and you want do something to honor Phil and to thank him. A college fund has been established for Phil's 11 grandchildren. If Phil made a positive impact in your life, please consider making a donation to this fund. Checks should be made payable to: "Lineberger College Fund" and sent to Sugar Land Baptist Church, 16755 Southwest Freeway, Sugar Land 77479.

Jon Lineberger is director of development/major gifts for Prestonwood Christian Academy in Plano. He is the proud nephew of Phil Lineberger.