



## Phillip Mott

September 5, 1936 - October 3, 2018

When reflecting on the life of Phillip Mott, it is easy to see his unwavering determination and his strong work ethic that was truly unmatched. He spent nearly his entire lifetime in the communities he loved, and through his hard work he was the sort of person everyone seemed to know. Phil was a straightforward guy who believed in being honest in everything he did. Blessed to share most of his days with the love of his life, he made the most of every day he was given. Life will never be the same without Phil here, but he leaves behind a priceless collection of memories that his loved ones will forever hold near and dear to their hearts.

Life during the 1930s was primarily defined by the Great Depression that covered our nation and much of the world like a wet blanket throughout the decade and beyond. Jobs were scarce, the unemployment rate soared, and things only became more dire when a drought covered our nation's heartland for nearly two years during this time. Despite the harsh realities around them, Harry and Jessie (Dalton) Mott were able to shift their focus to an exciting time in their own lives as they announced the birth of the baby boy they named Phillip R. on September 5, 1936, in Dowagiac, Michigan. The youngest of seven, Phil was joined in his family by his siblings, Jean, Betty, Hank, Janet, Larry, and Phyllis. His father gathered holly in the wild and would be considered to be a wholesale florist in today's world while his mother worked at home. Phil attended local schools and graduated from Decatur High School.

Known for his strong work ethic Phil entered the workforce when he was 13. He liked the game of hard work and found great reward in earning what he had. Phil started off working at service stations and in auto repair at that young age, and he continued working in that field until 1990. Also as a young man he was in the Air National Guard for six years. For years, Phil had his own gas stations in Kalamazoo.

It was while at work at the gas station that Phil's life was forever changed when he met the love of his life. Her name was Mardee VanKley, and he couldn't help but notice her as she walked by. He always said he was going to ask her out, and his crew ended up being

partially responsible when Mardee one day stopped by. They also helped plant the seed that drew them to one another. They began dating, and it didn't take the couple long to fall deeply in love. With a desire to spend the rest of their lives together Phil and Mardee eloped and were married on August 31, 1965, in Minnesota. Together they welcomed two children, Michelle and Michael, into their hearts and home.

In the early 70's Phil began learning to cultivate his own variety of holly in addition to working at the gas stations. In 1990, Phil went back full time to his family roots and into the nursery business. He and Mardee became the first holly cultivators in the country for Michigan winterberry. Through the help and support of others they have gone on to become the largest grower of Michigan winterberry in North America. The family Christmas Barn and tree farm were also well known among families in Southwest Michigan.

In his time away from work Phil enjoyed keeping busy. He loved his aviation days as he flew both planes and helicopters. Phil was a deer hunter and an avid sports fisherman. He also owned a sprint car race car and enjoyed going to dirt tracks to watch his sprint car.

With unending devotion to the people he loved, Phillip R. Mott was a blessing in the lives of his family and friends. He didn't shy away from doing things his own way yet was as kind and generous as they come. Phil never worried about the little things, and in everything he did he gave it his all and loved the journey. Deeply loved, he will be forever missed.

Phillip R. Mott, of Vicksburg, passed away on Wednesday, October 3, 2018, at the age of 82. Phil is survived by his wife, Mardee; two children, Michelle Mott, of Portage; Michael (Kathleen) Mott, of Kalamazoo; sister, Janet Knox, of IN; and several nieces and nephews. Phil was preceded in death by five siblings. The family will be having a memorial service on Saturday, October 13, 2018, at 11 a.m. at the McCowen & Secord Life Story Family Funeral Home, Rupert-Durham Chapel, 409 S. Main, Vicksburg (269-649-1697). The family will receive friends at the funeral home one hour prior starting at 10 a.m. Please visit Phil's webpage at <http://www.mccowensecord.com> where you can sign the guestbook and share a memory. Those who wish may make contributions to the West Michigan Cancer Center and/or American Red Cross.