



You Need to Meet...

Philippus Miller III

August 30, 2019

Sage Chapel, Cornell University

Ithaca, NY

Prelude: William Cowdery, Organ and Piano

Violin: Ralph Sokol – spontaneous gift

I Believe, Drake, Graham, Shirl & Stillman Cornell University Glee Club & Hangovers

Allow Me to Introduce you to... Phil Ezra Cornell, Family Friend

Dear Yasamin, and to all members of the family, in this beautiful and historic chapel, a sampling of Phil's friends surround you with their love, and to honor a man so important in our shared lives.

My name is Ezra Cornell. For those that do not know me, I am not the Founder of this University, but I am told by campus geneticists there is significant link to the Founder in my DNA. Please check your cell phones.

My friendship with Phil dates back to when he was a Cornell student, and as most of you know, once you shook his hand and were blessed with his optimistic and charming smile, he was your friend...connected for life.

We all share the sadness of his passing, so young, such a good man.

Can you recall meeting Phil for the first time, or the last time. I can almost guarantee it was a happy experience. Every time he greeted you he made sure you understood that you were important. His greeting included a pause in whatever he was doing, he looked you in the eyes, gave you a big smile and engaged you in pleasant and caring conversation.

In my experience, he never failed to greet, meet and be a pal forever. What he did, cost him moments of time, but what he gave was unqualified friendship and a new connection to not just Phil, but others. In many instances of first meeting someone, Phil could relate a shared experience, or suggest someone of shared interest... I often heard him say: “Hey, Ezra, **you need to meet** ‘so and so’, he or she is terrific, and here is why.....” He had a special knack for bridging people together and creating opportunities.

As you will learn this afternoon, there were many other wonderful facets about, Phil starting with his heritage. We hope you will be touched by what you learn and that it helps you maintain your memory of him. In fact, you might leave here thinking, “I didn’t know that about Phil.” So let’s begin to learn more about him, in fact let’s meet our friend Phil, again, and be inspired.

Many people from around the world have written Yasamin with condolences and stories in recent days. I will read just a few excerpts from the wonderful comments received:

- Phil was the “epitome” of what makes Hotelies special. Phil understood the meaning of hospitality and the importance of how you made others feel.

- Phil carved out such a special place **connecting** amazing people in need.... with amazing people of talent.
- Phil was genuine, caring and his story telling was legendary.
- Phil was a frequent attendee at the Cornell Hotel Society Asia Pacific Regional Conferences and was such a dedicated hotelier.
- Phil was always gracious about giving advice
- Phil was a mentor who guided so many on careers through the incredible network that is Cornell.
- From a *current* student: “I would not be where I am today without having received his constant guidance and support....I am so grateful to have known Phil.”
- From a current city building inspector, “Phil was kind and helpful, very good natured and a gentleman.”

These were just of very few of the tributes to a good and special man.

Phil lived by a code that was honorable and many of his deeds were selfless and worthy. He inspired many to be a better than what was expected.

Now, please meet Phil through the words of our guests. We start nearly 236 years ago with Taylor Kellogg of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Phil's Ancestry: Taylor Kellogg, The Society of the Cincinnati

Thank you, Ezra, and good afternoon. It's a privilege to be speaking to you all today and to give a glimpse of the Phil Miller that his friends in the Society of the Cincinnati knew. For those of you who don't this part of Phil's life, let me first explain who I am up here representing; I'm representing the roughly 4,000 descendants of Officers of the Continental Army and Navy who fought for independence and created this Nation. In 1783, Officers of the Continental forces came together to perpetuate the memory of the War for Independence, maintain the fraternal bonds between the officers, promote the ideals of the Revolution, advocate for the compensation promised to the officers by Congress and support members and *their families* in need.

Today, the Society of the Cincinnati is divided into fourteen constituent societies, established in each of the thirteen original states and France with one descendant representing their family's ancestor. Some 226 years later, that organization remains a vibrant community of fellowship continuing the efforts of the heroes who secured the independence of the United States. One of those heroes was Phil's fourth great-grandfather, Lieutenant Colonel Caleb North. Caleb North was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania and took part in almost every major campaign of the Revolution; Ticonderoga, Brandywine, Paoli, Germantown, the winter at Valley Forge, Monmouth and he was present during the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. After he retired from the Army in 1783, Caleb North would go on to serve as the High Sheriff in Philadelphia and serve as the President for the Pennsylvania chapter of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Like his namesakes before him, Phil represented Lieutenant Colonel Caleb North in the Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati and continued in his father's footsteps holding leadership positions. Phil dedicated his time over the years to help guide the organization helping articulate its strategic vision and just three months ago, utilized his vast network to help the Pennsylvania chapter host a Triennial event in which all fourteen Society constituencies came together in one location to share in the camaraderie of their Continental ancestors. As you can imagine, bringing 1,000 people together from around the globe can be challenging with multiple delicacies to manage but with Phil, not only did we have his leadership and hotel connections to leverage, we had his big heart, unmatched energy and unique ability to resonate with people.

I first met Phil a few years ago. I was a new member and like meeting any new group of people my anxiety was high. Phil immediately welcomed me to the group and almost at-once put me at ease. Ironically, I was also from Philadelphia and I met him as I was preparing to come here, to Cornell for graduate school. I moved here from Key West, Florida and during my time in Ithaca he helped me navigate snow in November...through April...and made time to have coffee with him always asking, "how can I help?" His ability to connect with people is truly a special ability matched by a humble confidence that made you feel welcomed.

I enjoyed furthering our friendship and continuing our efforts in the Society of the Cincinnati. As I thought about how to explain this side of a such a tremendous man, I thought I would reference a general trend in his many conversations with the organization. His voice and words in an organization over 200 years old brought a modern appeal to values and principles that his ancestor fought for. Phil knew that his ancestors' efforts to found this Nation were not created by men who were not without sin but in a broader context than any one individual, their efforts produced a country that is founded on unalienable rights. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are all so often subject to political interpretation, societal pressures and to this day we still struggle to define each element of these rights. But while our history is complex and invokes challenging conversations and actions, Phil knew that these rights weren't solely American rights, but they are also human values. As evidenced by the diverse group of people in this chapel, Phil's love and touch was global and included all. I'm sad that I met him too late in life to know him as long as some of you but I know that I can continue to embody his character and that by helping and loving others, treating people with respect and free of judgment and living life to the fullest we can all aspire to make this world a little better and make him smile from above.

Thank you for letting me share this portion of Phil's life with you. To help explain his Philadelphia life, please let me introduce his cousins, Geordie Miller and Bibbi Hotaling.

Phil's Philadelphia Years: Bibbi Hotaling, Geordie Miller, First Cousins

Good afternoon and welcome. How pleased and overwhelmed Phil would be to see each and every one of you here in Sage Chapel. We come together today to celebrate the life of Philip Miller and to share with one another, not only Phil's legacy and achievements, but also our singular memories of him as a family member and friend. So much has already been expressed in beautiful testimonies written about Phil on Facebook and other media. What more can be said?

My name is Bibbi Hotaling and I am one of Phil's many cousins here from Philadelphia. What I would like to share with you today are a few observations of what Phil was like in his youth, and what I came to appreciate most about Phil, as an adult.

You have to meet Phil Miller!

Phil was unusual, well, right from the start. As children, we cousins grew up within about 8 miles of each other. Susan, Philip, Geordie, Jay, Bibbi, Cassandra, Caleb, Alexander, Leezle, Lisa, Henry...one big pack of puppies. In the family pool from sun up to sun down, on bicycles and beaches, sleds and skates, motorcycles and dune buggies, we were each other's best friends and play mates. Testing the limits, getting into trouble, and laughing until it hurt.

But Phil was different. Right from the get-go.

Phil attended the Haverford School for boys for all his school years, where he excelled in both squash and music, but surprisingly not in academics. Though obviously extremely bright, Philip was also highly principled, and, well stubborn. He was known to say things like "that assignment is stupid and I am not doing it", and "I will never use Calculus in my life, so I'm not taking it!" This, of course, was challenging for his parents and made it difficult for him to get into the Cornell School of Hotel Administration, which was his singular goal in life. The admissions committee passed over his application for many excruciating months before the dean, exhausted by Phil's literal presence on his doorstep, finally acquiesced to give this unusual lad a try. And how he flourished there!

As children, Phil preferred the company of the grown-ups rather than, more unrefined, hedonistic youths. While we all snuck out early from family gatherings to hang out in cousin Jay's den of iniquity, drinking beer and watching Saturday Night Live and Johnny Carson, Phil stayed on to chat with Grandma and Pop-Pop, play chess, discuss Dickens, or enjoy male choral singing with the Orpheus Club.

We couldn't figure him out!

Many of my memories of Phil center around the family compound upon which we grew up, as well as Mount Desert Island in Maine, where generations of the family vacationed. In Maine, we loved lobster dinners, Mrs. Norberg's fish chowder, hand-made blueberry pies, and a rather tame seagull named Oscar that seemed to come to our grandmother's call. Philip loved these

places and I will always find him there, particularly on Mount Desert Island, watching the sun rise on Cadillac Mountain and enjoying popovers at the Jordan Pond House.

Bus boy at the Claremont Hotel, night manager in Phoenix Arizona, then off to Cornell. Year in Washington DC, talented and impressive friends, but rarely a girlfriend, we cousins didn't know what to make of him. It wasn't until years later, once we cousins had progressed through multiple evolutionary stages of our own, that we actually started to get Phil.

Over the years, what brought me closest to Phil was his love for his family, and for Yasamin. To find a soulmate in life is a rare and beautiful gift, and that is what he found in Yasamin. Together they shared a matched intelligence, a welcoming and embracing nature, and a devotion to each other. Phil and Yasamin celebrated not just annual anniversaries, but monthly ones as well. Absences were recognized by bedside love notes, mornings were greeted with a cup of coffee at the foot of the stairs, and rainstorms were recollections of intimate moments.

Together with Phil and Yasamin, we started a tradition of "Cousins' Weekend," in which we gathered with our respective spouses, to celebrate our love for one another and the uniqueness of our relationships with our soulmates. We took walks, told stories, shared memories, and made plans for all the things the six of us would do in the future. We actually looked forward to growing OLD together. These dreams have not changed, but we will now have to continue without Phil.

Dear Phil, treasured cousin, we miss you. Growing old in your good company would be an honor and a pleasure. In your absence, we vow to appreciate every moment we have life's breath, every moment we have to share with our loved ones, and every opportunity we have to help someone in need. As we hold these qualities in our hearts let us strive to express them in our actions. Let us go forward in peace and unity.

Namaste

Thank you, Bibbi. My name is Geordie Miller, Philip's first cousin. And I have the honor of speaking on behalf of the Miller side of his family—Aunt Wistie, his mother, Caleb, his brother. And my mother, Mary, sisters Elise and Cassandra, and brother Alexander.

Our fathers were brothers, and we grew up in households that enjoyed great literature and shared tall tales of their early English years, when our grandfather was stationed in Oxford. And we also reveled in the family's eccentric wit.

Over the generations, we've memorialized our ancestors in Valley Forge National Park, with epitaphs that read like sonnets. And we particularly treasure the words on our grandfather's headstone—that of Philippus Miller (the first)—which simply reads: "His life was gentle." (This is borrowed from a beautiful monologue by Antony upon the death of Brutus in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar.)

We also shared an infamous grandmother, who was kicked out of more old folks' homes than anyone could count. And I remember discussing with Philip and other family members how we should memorialize *her* when she finally met her fate. And together, we thought of the perfect solution. She would eventually share the headstone with our lovely grandfather, which would now read as follows: "*His life was gentle... Hers was not.*"

So, the tradition continues. But on a more somber note today. And in honor of Philip, and all of you, his family and friends, I submit the following few stanzas in his memory. More than an epitaph, for sure, but far less than the epic poem from which it is inspired.

It's a romantic vision of Philip's life—his journey from Philadelphia to the great place in which we now meet. I call it Philip of Delphi.

PHILIP OF DELPHI

His odyssey began
In the city of love.
Of brothers and sisters.
And a family's joy.
Where eagles fly.

And he studied the words
Of those greatest with words.
And he learned to sing
From a vaudevillian stage.

And in his home,
Under the Linden tree,
He grew to heights
Above other men.
Until the shade
Was no longer enough.

And he sailed away,
Bound like Odysseus for Ithaca,
Where he learned from the prophets
At the top of the hill
And the depths of the gorge.

And one day, he met the jasmine flower.
And he said to her, "My love for you
will cross the waters
And no arrow will pierce my heel.
And we will travel to the corners of worlds
And weave a path
That connects all paths."

And together they grew,
Greater than Achilles and Briseis.
Mixing the wine of Dionysus
With the gospel of St. Cristopher.

And they dreamed of growing old
By the water's edge.
Where goldenrods and asters
Give seed to the bunting
And shade to the minnows below.

But one day
The gods called Philip home.
And the birds stopped.
And fish were still.

And his brothers and sisters came
From the East. And the Asian Kingdoms.
And the City of Delphi. And they cried.
Far past the Macedonian walls.

"I leave you in the hills of Syracuse,"
Philip told them.
"And I sing to you past the siren songs
And give to you: each other.
One family,
Furled in the arms of the jasmine flower."

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Meet Phil, the Singer: Gene Stromecki, Classmate, Friend, and Fellow Hangover

Let me tell you about Phil Miller, the singer.

I had the privilege to sing with Phil in the Cornell Glee Club, where he was President, in the Hangovers and in an acapella group in Washington before he returned to his beloved Ithaca. To me Phil embodies the words of the Cornell song, The Hill, "O Cornell of the kindly heart, the friendly hand!"

As a fellow bass of similar height, I often stood next to Phil. What a delight that was for me! His non-stop banter, amusing tales and endless storehouse of jokes kept me chortling until it hurt and we received the well-deserved "snake eyes" from Professor Sokol. His imitation of Cornell President Frank Rhodes was frighteningly good.

On Glee Club tours, we were practically inseparable. I found out later we were referred to as the Bobbsey Twins. Although we are the same age, I always felt with Phil that I was in the presence of someone wiser and possessed of more experience.

Phil taught me to make substitutes for lost tuxedo studs and cufflinks out of brass paper fasteners. His own cuff links were a gift to his uncle from the King of Sweden.

After the King's Lynn Festival in 1982, Phil and I stayed for an extra week and toured Canterbury, York and Edinburgh. I tried hard to impress him by talking about the Isle of Skye, where Bonnie Prince Charlie had been spirited away after the defeat of the Scots at Culloden in 1746. Phil replied, "that's right, and my family includes the hereditary rulers of the Isle of Skye."

In 1989, my wife, Margaret and I, joined the China Tour as alumni guests. After a grueling cross-country flight, we lagged behind the sprightly undergrads trotting through the San Francisco Airport to board the flight to Singapore. By the time we reached the gate, they had run out of coach seats, and we were issued boarding passes with 3-digit row numbers. Imagine our surprise when we arrived at our seats in the First-Class Cabin in the upper deck of the 747. Who should be there to greet us but Phil, who raised his first glass of champagne and declared, "well Geno, we have landed on our feet once again."

This past April we lost Professor Thomas Sokol, who led choral music at Cornell for 38 years. The Professor has added an awesome bass to his Choir. Can't you just hear them now, exchanging jokes, old stories and hearty laughs?

As singers we know that when we raise our voices in song together, we share a brief taste of heaven while here on earth. And now we have a new reason to sing, because when we do, Phil is here with us once again.

And so, when the time comes for all of us to get on that Bus for the final Glee Club Tour called Heaven, someone please, save me the seat next to Phil.

Ave Maria, Biebl, Cornell University Glee Club, Directed by Ron Schiller

Phil, the Fraternity Brother: Rick Bress, Chuck Geerhart, Dave Lyons
– Delta Chi Fraternity

Hi. I am Rick Bress. Cornell class of '82. I met Phil in the fall of '79 when he rushed Delta Chi, and for four decades was privileged to count him as my friend.

Chuck, Dave, and I will be saying a few words about "Phil the Fraternity Brother." We will be brief—because we have discretion.

This part of the program might have been called "Phil among the Barbarians." Imagine if you will Phil, age 19, scion of a historical family, proud product of the Main Line, hair immaculate, transposed onto the set of Animal House. Then imagine that his first roommate was Brother Blutarski.

Phil of course did his best to civilize all of us. For instance, he used his Hotelier skills in his stint as our Kitchen Manager. He succeeded in minimizing food poisoning and upgraded our daily fare. He was less successful keeping the brothers from pillaging the food stores: every evening Phil locked the walk-in refrigerator door; every night we took the door from its hinges. At any rate, aside from Phil's odd devotion to good order, cleanliness, and personal hygiene, he was a core member of the house, and well loved. Even then, much of what made Phil Phil stood out to the rest of us.

Even then, Phil had a restless energy. He was happiest in motion. Hiking in the gorge, driving to the Pines, or heading down to the State Street Diner at 3 in the morning. The "where" did not matter much. Phil was not for sitting about.

Phil was also an intensely social animal. Not so much in the "face time" sense of large parties or loud bars. No. Phil was at his best and most comfortable in settings that permitted good conversation and witty repartee.

Even then, Phil also had an extraordinary way with people from all walks of life. This was exemplified by the relationship he forged with John Trussell, Class of '28. Mr. Trussell came by the house each year for reunion weekend. Most of us could not relate to a "brother" who looked more like our grandfather. But Phil could see past that. He actively reached out to Mr. Trussell, and forged a lasting friendship.

Although Phil was, in this way, equally comfortable slumming it at Delta Chi or hobnobbing at the Alfalfa Club, he was in no sense a social chameleon. In all contexts, at all times, with all people, he was always and steadfastly Phil.

The final time I saw my old roommate was last summer. I had rented a house about 15 miles from here on Cayuga Lake for our family's vacation. Phil got back from Europe our last evening there. He had not slept in over 30 hours. That did not matter. He immediately jumped in his car and came over to share a beer or two, meet the grandkids, and reconnect. It was what true friends do. It was vintage Phil.

Phil Thoughts Post College (Chuck Geerhart)

I met Phil in 1979 when he joined Delta Chi. He immediately became one of my favorite brothers because he was hilarious. He and I always laughed uproariously whenever when we got together over the next 40 years. We both appreciated the many absurdities of modern life.

After graduation, we got together frequently in DC, where I was from. Phil came to visit me in Norfolk when I was in the Navy. I was food service officer on a large ship, and Phil came onboard for lunch one day. Now, you've got to know, I was feeding each crewmember on \$3.25 a day. This was the land of canned green beans simmering on a steam table for hours. Think liver and onions. Not high cuisine. But Phil, the hotel school graduate, sat down and dug in, and had a great time in the officer's wardroom.

Phil came to visit me in LA and San Francisco, often to go see our favorite band, the Grateful Dead.

My mom, Connie Geerhart, was married here in Sage Chapel in August 1952, 67 years ago. She loved Cornell as much as Phil. She was a member of the "perpetual reunion club" (where alumni come to reunion every year) and also attended Cornell Alumni University several times. She always looked up Phil, and he would always spend time with her. I would see him and thank him for making time for my mom, who would always be full of questions. Many questions. Phil would mock roll his eyes and say, "Your mother!" He was so kind to her.

Phil and Yasamin came down to DC for her 80th birthday party at the 4 Seasons in 2010.

In 2002, he treated my mother-in-law to a behind the scenes tour of Statler hotel, which she remembers to this day.

And every time we got back to Cornell, including 2018 for CAU, Phil and Yasamin would make time for us. I'll never forget the last time I spent with them last summer at their house and then at a local Italian place, where of course Phil knew everyone and insisted we get the hot wings.

Phil was the kind of guy you could not see for three years, and then when you did see him it was as if you'd been together yesterday.

Greetings, I am David Lyons, fraternity brother and friend of Phil's for 40 years. After college, Phil and I remained close through our many visits and phone conversations with one another. Phil was especially fond of his visits to Chautauqua Lake – about 3 hours west of here – where my family spent our summer vacations and his visits to Vero Beach, Florida where my wife and I have lived for over 30 years and where Phil and Yasamin have now had a second home since 2005.

Our mutual love of the water – swimming, boating and just being near the ocean has always made for a close bond between us.

More important has been our shared devotion to our families. When Yasamin and Cyrus thankfully came into Phil's life over 20 years ago I witnessed the sea change in Phil. He became the Family Man that I believe he had always yearned for. From then on every call – every visit became focused on family.

In that light I want to share a humorous family story about Phil. When Phil was relatively new to his family life, he brought Yasamin and Cyrus to Chautauqua Lake for a visit. One day we took our ski boat out on the lake for some fun and we had a large inner tube that we towed behind it. Cyrus and my two kids – Brittany and Christopher all jumped in the tube first excited for some action. Phil was driving, the kids were being towed behind the boat – everyone was having a great time. When the kids were done they prodded Phil to give it a try. I don't think Phil had ever really been egged on by a group of 10 -12-year olds so he – being the good sport that he was – agreed to go.

We more or less shoved the big guy into the tube and off we went. As I was driving I asked the kids how he was doing – they said - Go Faster – so I did. Two minutes later I said how about we give Phil the figure 8 – the kids screamed yes –yes. So I drove the boat in the shape of a large 8 and as we came back across our own boat wake, expecting some decent turbulence in the water - I looked back just in time to see Phil get launched in the tube about 5 feet into the air.

The craziest part of his airborne moment was that Phil and the tube had been completely inverted – the tube pointed to the sky and Phil’s head pointed to the lake. Uh Oh I thought. I turned my head back around to check our heading kind of knowing what would come next and then I heard the three kids scream – He Made It!

Astonished I looked back and Phil somehow had miraculously righted the tube in mid-air and was back riding it on top of the water. The four of us in the boat had our mouths wide open in sheer amazement and Phil nervously looked at me and was giving me the quit sign. As I was pulling the tow rope to get him back to the boat I could see that his face was white as a sheet and he was mumbling to himself. As he climbed into the boat the kids were high fiving him which I knew he loved but then he looked at me and said – “Never Again!”

I was laughing and said – the kids made me do it! He gave me his head- cocked Phil stare and said “Thanks a lot Pal!!!!”

To me this story embodies so much of Phil –

- His love of the water and sense of adventure
- Always such a good sport about everything he did
- And his love of being with family above all else

Cheers to you friend – we will miss you.

Phil, Member of Quill and Dagger: Ezra Cornell

Beginning with his family roots in Philadelphia, his education in our school of hospitality, and his membership in the Society of the Cincinnati, Phil was born to a life of service.

He was involved in many things and with a lot of people, and he loved it. He had a very good memory for names and faces.

I met Phil when he was a junior at Cornell. At the time I was Alumni President of the Quill and Dagger Society of Cornell. He was a newly initiated Q&D.

Q&D, as Quill and Dagger is called, is not a secret society such as Yale’s Skull & Bones. Q&D is a registered student organization on campus. Its members and activities are quite visible and distinguished.

Q&D is a coed student senior honorary started in 1893. The Society is very selective and invites campus leaders in the Spring of their junior year to become members.

Examples of Q&Ds include leaders of student government, editors of the student newspapers, captains of athletic teams, presidents of student organizations, leaders of singing groups, and students known to be important “noteworthy men and women on Campus”.

The purpose of Q&D is to help **connect** these campus leaders, help them become friends and facilitate their working together as seniors to make the Cornell Campus a better place. A near perfect organization for Phil to have a lifetime association.

As a possible invitee to this honorary society, Phil was a triple threat:

- A leader within the Glee Club and Hangovers,
- Delta Chi Fraternity
- and the Hotel School.

As a student he desired to create bridges among people within and throughout the Cornell Community and beyond. Q&D was made for Phil.

Not surprising, Q&D members tend to be exceptionally successful, loyal and generous alumni of Cornell. Corporate presidents, professionals, military leaders, politicians and distinguished citizens of American and beyond.

Many Q&D’s have been named to the Cornell Council, and become members of the Board of Trustees.... including the current Chairman of the Board.

Phil followed me as President of the Q&D alumni association. Under Phil’s 6 ½ years of leadership, the alumni participation and fund raising dramatically improved.

When Phil called and asked for your help with something, you could not turn him down. He enabled many alumni to feel good about their involvement with the Society and Cornell. He helped alumni sense the value of their relationships, helped them feel wanted and needed.

And of course, he would try so hard to create new opportunities for Q&D alumni, not just in their Cornell relationships, but beyond. He took a personal interest in each of us.

Let’s talk about Hotelie for a few moments. The students and alumni of the Hotel School proudly call themselves Hotelies ***and*** Cornellians.

Phil, like our most successful Hotelies, lived and embraced the culture of **hospitality**. The meaning of a good life for Phil was about giving a little more attention than the next person, teaching others about inspired service and enabling people to feel special. Phil was the consummate Hotelie.

It is my honor to introduce our next speaker, Dean of the School of Hotel Administration, the distinguished Kate Walsh.

Phil, the Consummate Hotelie: Kate Walsh, Dean of the School of Hotel Administration

Good afternoon, I'm Kate Walsh, and I am here because you need to meet Phil Miller the consummate hotelie –or perhaps hotelier. They are sort of synonymous. Now, when he first heard the term hotelie- and hotelie-4-life, my husband Greg, who is not a hotelie - but is also a friend of Phil's - because who wasn't? - said to me, hotelie? What is that? It sounds like some sort of cult. In the moment, it was hard for me to find the right words to describe what it means. It's one of those things where you know it when you see it, or better yet, feel it. So I said to him, you know how Phil Miller is? That's what it means to be a hotelie. And he nodded, because he immediately got it.

I have been a member of the faculty here for almost 20 years. I was also a graduate student at the hotel school from 1988-1990. And in between the ten years I was away from Ithaca, I often came back to visit. That's when Phil came back to our school to lead our alumni affairs team. Recently, Yasamin asked me how I met Phil, and try as I might, I honestly cannot remember the first moment I met him. I feel as if Phil was always here, part of the fabric of our school. I'm guessing that's because Phil probably reached out to me on one of my visits, and in his graciousness, acted as if he we already knew each other. That's how Phil was. He made you feel right at home, like you were already fast friends. And then you were.

I'm one of those people who can meet and talk with people all day long, but then I come home really tired and cranky. Phil was the exact opposite. I think he gained his energy from connecting with others. And boy did he connect. Phil intuitively understood that relationships make our world and our work hum. His cultivated his relationships by being really generous, giving way more than he received, with no return ask. Whether he realized it or not, Phil actually modeled what we try to teach in our classes. It was almost as if he was messaging to our students: "I have no agenda; I am just here if you want any help – and if you are inclined, pay me back by one day paying it forward and doing the same."

I am not exaggerating when I tell you that every single time a student reached out to Phil for help and advice, and it had to have been hundreds, if not thousands over the years, Phil responded back, like immediately. He loved meeting students as an entrepreneur in residence, giving them start-up advice. Our career services team always reached out to him for guidance. Faculty regularly asked Phil to guest lecture in their classes, myself included.

In fact, Phil visited my career planning class for seniors whenever I asked – which was every semester. Now, we have the most amazing students. But sometimes they have tricky career plans. I remember there was one graduate student with whom I just ran out of ideas on how to help. What did I do? Reach out to Phil. What did Phil do? Reached right out to the student. I felt kind of guilty because I thought I would be making Phil's day harder but honestly, he didn't see it that way. They had coffee and then met again. After listening, because he was great

listener, Phil told the student the people that he ‘needed to meet’ but he didn’t drop it at that point, as most of us would; he connected them. He kept on giving. He had that kind energy and aura.

So three years ago, I became interim dean, right at a time when, as many of you know, alumni were pretty upset. And I think it’s fair to say that more than a few were angry. While all of that emotion came from a place of care for our school, it was a little intimidating. So in one of my first meetings, before I even officially started, I was with this riled up group of alumni in NYC. And as I entered the room, Phil just appears, giving me that great big Phil smile. He asks what I need – coffee, water, ushers me to my seat, and gives me this kind of goofy thumbs-up. Honestly, I don’t know how he knew it, or even if he knew it, but it was just what I needed, at the exact moment I needed it. So during that year, every time I was at an alumni event after that, I would begin by looking up, because Phil was pretty tall, and there it was, that giant smile. He was always there, and I always felt, in my corner, cheering me on.

And maybe that’s the message Phil would be thrilled if we all took from today, in his honor. Being a hotelie is much more than being friendly. It’s more than being gracious, helpful and even generous with your time and energy. It’s more than making someone feel like they are home, and it’s even more than connecting others together. If I’m going by the Phil Miller gold standard, and why don’t we?, **being a hotelie means making a person feel, time and again, that you always have their back and you are here to help propel them forward.**

I think this is probably one of the reasons why Phil was such a happy person. He had figured out early on the gift of giving, that it comes right back to you, and is one of the best ways to find joy in your life. Phil really did always look like the cat that ate the canary. I am certain he would be over the moon, if we tried Phil’s approach to living a happy life, and we all looked that way too.

I sincerely thank Yasamin for the *honor* to share with you, Phil the consummate hotelie. Now, I am so pleased to introduce you to Deniz Ömürgönülşen, who is going to introduce you to Phil as the ultimate connector.

Phil, the Ultimate Connector: Deniz Ömürgönülşen, SHLA Grad, Turkish Daughter

On Friday, August 8 at 3:30am, my Ithaca mom, Yasamin sent me a message “Phil had a stroke please pray for him”.

As a stroke survivor, I knew too well what he was going through...I knew he could hear and understand everything that was around him at that time. Yasamin made it possible for me to speak to him... “I love you Phil. You mean a lot to me and the entire Hotelie family around the globe you have built.”

Yes, he did build that family. He was the cornerstone of the Hotel School and the glue that kept us all together. He knew everyone. I mean everyone.

He was the real “linked in”. With his famous introduction... “You need to meet...” Not only he connected people, but he also took the time to listen and he genuinely cared. He always looked you in the eye and stayed present when talking. He made you feel like you are the only other person in the world, and he was always listening for “how can I help?”

His purpose in life was to help and be of service.

He was my first boss. I worked for him in the Alumni Affairs office at Cornell. We would open the door at 8am every morning. Although he made fun of my Turkish Coffee shots I knew he was one of my biggest fans and I was his.

He was a big bachelor then - never in all those years he thought about marriage. And one day he walks into the office and I could sense there was something very different about him. His aura was glowing, he was better dressed, even better than his best mood (although he was always positive anyway).

He was in love...

Yasamin entered his life like a beautiful butterfly... she swooped him up and showed him real love. I think he was even surprised to see how much he can truly love. And that love my friends made Phil an even greater person.

He was strong, loyal, kind and generous and filled with love... for his Yasamin, for his family, friends and for life itself.

Yasamin became my Ithaca mom immediately when I met her and Phil “my boss” became my Ithaca dad once they got married. He stepped up to the challenge to be the Ithaca dad of a young adult with great grace. He kept me out of trouble and made sure I had a good job, great circle of friends. Soon after I realized he did that for so many.

His stories were intriguing and full of lessons to be learned. His loud laughter would fill the room. His singing would complete every party. The way he would fix his hair was his signature. His hugs - big and warm. He was a big person with a big heart.

For Phil – “life was love and love was life”... what keeps everyone together is his love. He just gave and contributed to everyone with no expectations of anything in return.

Finally, Phil and I had a few things in common...

1. We were almost born on the same day - a few years apart. But we loved celebrating each other's big day back to back and bragged about our Libra personalities - social, popular, loyal and full of love for life.
2. We share an incredible commitment to The Hotel School and to Cornell Hotel Society. No matter where life took us, we made sure that people stayed connected and were helped.
3. And our love for Yasamin. Of course, his much greater as a life partner and mine as an adopted daughter.

Phil, I promise you to cherish these three shared passions as long as I shall breath. Philippus Miller the III. May you Rest In Peace.

I love you with all my heart and thank you for being who you are...

Precious Lord, arr. Schiller Cornell University Glee Club Hangovers

Meet Phil, the Family Man: Sami Husseini, Sanjeev Vobra, Close Local Friends

My name is Sami Husseini, native of Lebanon, long time resident of Ithaca.

Thirty-seven years ago, my wife Catherine and I settled in Ithaca, Catherine's hometown, to work and mostly to raise our children close to family.

As aunts and grandparents gradually moved to southern climes, we were most fortunate to meet Phil and Yasamin. That was 20 years ago, and our 3 boys were between the ages of 13 and 17. Very quickly Yasamin and Phi entered our lives and became aunt and uncle to our boys. Weekly dinners, holidays, birthdays, concerts, numerous weekends every summer at our cottage on Cayuga Lake, an unforgettable Mediterranean cruise, graduations, marriages and one grandson!

Every teenage boy needs an uncle, who speaks his language, thinks like him, knows the popular culture and guides him. And Phil was the ideal younger uncle for my three boys. Lucky them. He taught them about boating, playing squash, grilling, eating lobster; any sort of trivia (by the way he was unbeatable, he knew everything about every topic). He joined them in appreciating music, books, history.

A great storyteller, he inspired them with the accounts of his travel to exotic faraway places in four continents, his work on cruise ships, safaris, restaurants, and camps. And when they became of age, he shared with them his expertise and appreciation of beer, scotch, single malt, and his favorite: Teachers!

That was the Phil I would like you to meet.

Phil was the person I could call on at any time, and without any hesitation, day or night, for help. Feeding the cat, a last-minute ride to the airport, bailing me out after losing my house and car keys. Always there, cheerful with a smile. He called himself the Phil shuttle!

Phil is a multi-dimensional person, as previous speakers have nicely described. For me the most distinct aspect of Phil's personality was his cheerfulness, his kindness, his respect for people who do their job, no matter what they are, who they are, or what is their rank. That aspect of Phil's personality came out unscripted, totally spontaneously and under the utmost stress, all of us mortals will one day face. That fateful sad day 3 weeks ago, Catherine and I were with Yasamin and with Phil from the moment they entered the emergency room. It is very hard for me to relive it and to tell it, but in our last moments with Phil, when he undoubtedly understood the seriousness of his condition, and what might happen next, Phil's gracious, generous, kind, and courageous personality came out spontaneously. With his trademark smile and cheer, he thanked every single person who attended to his care: from housekeepers, to nurses, to physicians, until he no longer could. He showed a grace we could all only hope to have.

This is the Phil I like you to meet and to remember.

I cannot put in words how sad those past 3 weeks have been, and what Phil meant to me and to my family. I will only say, Phil you were my young brother in America. Phil, we will always keep you in our memories, and cherish every single moment you and Yasamin shared with the Husseini family. We do miss you immensely. We love you Yasamin.

Sanjeev Vohra:

It takes a real man to have not one, but TWO urologists line up to speak for him.

He was one of my closest friends in Ithaca, and hands down the most fun to be around. We spent a lot of time - our initial friendship was built over tennis, spent a lot of time playing tennis and he was the only tennis player for whom I had to do the trash talking for his side. Such a friendly man. So if I was winning and he would start coming back, I would always crack the same joke. I would say, "it's Miller time". He never once said it. I would give a few years of my life to have a few more sets of Miller time.

I just want to leave you with this picture of Phil: He's checking into the Heavenly Hilton (or probably Hotelies will tell us the Four Seasons), he's sitting at the bar, he's ruining another Scotch with lots of ice, he's charming everybody around him. He's going to step out for a heavenly Pines burger afterwards, which was one of his favorite things to do.

My wife and I have lots and lots of wonderful memories of Phil and Yasamin and our time together, and I feel he's always going to be here in spirit and we're always going to be here for Yasamin and with Yasamin, and we'll celebrate Phil's life, we'll miss him dearly. There's a little prayer that Yasamin would like everyone to say.

A Very Phil-like Phil-osophy: Assembly

“May today there be peace within.

May you trust that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith in yourself and others.

May you use the gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content with yourself just the way you are.

Let this knowledge settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and every one of us...”

— Saint Terese of Liseaux

Moment of Silence

In the Spirit of Phil as Generous Host: Ezra Cornell

On behalf of Yasamin *and* the family:

- a very grateful thank you to all who spoke today, and
- to all who helped bring us together,
- to all who have attended here at Sage Chapel and at the reception to follow at the Statler Ball Room.
- And for the prayers for Phil, Yasamin and their family.

Yasamin’s wish is that after today you have learned something new and feel even closer to our dear Phil.

Following this service everyone is invited to the Statler Ballroom for a wonderful reception that is certain to be lively and enjoyable.

When you walk over to the reception and when enjoying the festivities please be “a connector, like Phil.” *As you are talking to people make an effort to introduce them to someone they don’t know.*

What brought us together today was sad. Life changes fast. We should try to enjoy every moment of life with the benefit of knowing many friends.

Today, I heard many aspects of Phil, some I didn’t know. What stood out for me was that:

- He deeply loved Yasamin and his family;
- Phil was passionate about Cornell University and the School of Hotel Administration;
- He was a loving and caring man who easily gave of himself in service to others,
- He made friends by the thousands and was constantly trying to make connections and create opportunities for others;
- Phil was proud of his heritage, and always happy when singing with others.

In a moment, please join The Cornell Glee Club singing The Evening Song. This is one of the many Cornell songs that are dear to Cornellians and was a favorite of Phil's. The words are in the program.

When the song ends, please let Yasamin and the family make their way, and lead us to the Statler. She looks forward to meeting all there.

You might also look for the video booth where you can record a message or recollection of Phil. Please not a message of condolence, but a story of Phil, or of how he might have helped shape your life. The videos will be available on the philmler.forevermissed.com website.

As Yasamin is leaving please continue standing and take a moment to greet the people near you,.....make a connection like Phil would do.

Thank you Phil Miller. You helped build friendships and careers, you brought optimism, hope and we honor your memory.

He brought people together in this community and around world.

We thank the Lord Almighty that Phil Miller was important in our lives.

Ladies and gentlemen, PLEASE RISE AND SING The Evening Song.

The Evening Song, Tyrell Cornell University Glee Club and Assembly

*When the sun fades far away, in the Crimson of the West
And the voices of the day, murmur low and sink to rest*

*Music with the twilight falls
o'er the sleeping lake and dell
Tis an echo from the walls
of our own, our fair Cornell*

*Welcome night and welcome rest, fading music fare thee well
Joy to all we love the best, love to thee our fair Cornell*

Philippus Miller III, age 58, passed away on Saturday, August 10, 2019 after suffering a stroke.

Born October 14, 1960 in Philadelphia, PA, Phil is survived by his beloved wife of 19 years, Yasamin Miller of Ithaca, NY, stepson Cyrus DiCiccio of Palo Alto, CA, mother Sally Wistar Miller of Bryn Mawr, PA, brother Caleb Miller of San Rafael, CA, in-laws Candy and Ali Sarraf of Ontario, CN, and a loving extended family. Phil is preceded in death by his father, Philippus Miller Jr.

Phil was a primogeniture member of The Society of the Cincinnati. Phil was an alumnus of the Haverford School and completed his education at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration. At Cornell he was a member of Delta Chi fraternity, the Quill and Dagger Senior Honorary Society, the Cornell Glee Club, and the Hangovers singing group. Phil served as an Entrepreneur-in-Residence at the Cornell Hotel School's Pillsbury Institute for Entrepreneurship, and secretary and former president of the Cornell Hotel Society Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Cornell Hotel School alumni association. He was greatly admired by everyone whose lives he touched and has been referred to as the consummate Cornell "Hotelie".

Phil spent 11 happy years as the Hotel School's Director of Alumni Affairs and Secretary of its alumni association, the Cornell Hotel Society. He was the Executive Editor of the alumni magazine, supervised the operations of more than 60 alumni chapters worldwide, and assisted one of the most active alumni associations in the world in its evolution from a print-based to an online organization.

Phil traveled and worked extensively, most recently as Founder and Managing Director of Philippus Miller III & Associates executive search firm, which served hospitality entities worldwide, and as a Founder and Senior Managing Director at Paramount Lodging Advisors, a hospitality real estate and advisory company.

First and foremost, Phil was a devoted husband to his beloved wife, Yasamin, and their relationship was a joy to anyone privileged to spend time in their company. He was a vibrant and active man, always ready with a smile, a firm handshake, and a story. He was a relentlessly energetic and positive force of nature. He was always up for an adventure or new experience, especially when it involved good food, travel, and meeting new people. Phil was a loving figure who believed in the greatness of people and their abilities. That he had so many true friendships and touched so many lives is a testament to his genuine interest in helping and serving others. Blessed with smarts, sharp wit, sense of humor, great smile, and wonderful singing voice, Phil appreciated the nuances of life, always choosing to be persistently and relentlessly positive, radiating good cheer. Phil lived by a very consistent code of morality, ethics, and perfect manners and always set a standard to be admired. He was a true gentleman.

The name "Phil" comes from the Greek verb meaning to love, and no one embodied this more than Phil. He loved his family, friends, colleagues, and life and will remain forever in our hearts.



Years ago, Phil found a New Yorker cartoon that perfectly summed up the story of Phil and Yasamin. In the cartoon one snail is telling another snail "I don't care that she is a tape dispenser. I love her." This is our Phil – he loved all of us unconditionally, regardless of who we were. The logo above was created as a symbol of the love Phil and Yasamin shared, but also as a reminder to all of us of how important it is to look into the hearts of one another...and love.

❖ *I am eternally grateful too ALL who were involved in organizing and being a part of such a special day to honor our Phil. ym*

