



Donald C. Danielson

December 3, 1919 - May 7, 2015

Donald C. Danielson, Indiana philanthropist and business leader, died Thursday at his home in New Castle after a brief illness. He was 95.

“Danny” Danielson served as vice chairman of City Securities, the oldest and largest Indiana-based investment bank, commuting regularly to his office in Indianapolis until the months preceding his death. He was former president of Modernfold and led the expansion of a new industry, as the accordion-fold Modernfold Door transformed the way businesses, schools and churches utilized interior space.

He was the longest-serving trustee on record at his alma mater, Indiana University, sitting on the board from 1958 to 1980 and serving as president for 11 of those years. He spurred the creation of IU’s Wells Scholar program.

As a philanthropist, he led fundraising campaigns in his hometown and across the state that consistently exceeded their targeted goal. He served as vice chair and then as co-chair of two IU campaigns that raised a collective \$800 million for the university.

For his excellence in business and service to his state, Danielson in 2009 received the Sachem award, the highest honor in the state of Indiana. Multiple times he was named a Sagamore of the Wabash by an Indiana governor, and,

in 2014, the Indiana Historical Society named him a Living Legend. He was inducted into the Junior Achievement of Central Indiana Business Hall of Fame in 2010.

Danielson spent his childhood in Minnesota and South Dakota before becoming the first person in his family to attend college, coming to IU on a baseball scholarship.

He graduated in 1942 with a bachelor's degree in education before entering in the U.S. Navy. He served in both the Pacific and Atlantic theaters of World War II until 1946, when he was honorably discharged with the rank of lieutenant, senior grade.

Upon graduation, Danielson had been signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers. When the war ended, the Dodgers once again invited Danielson to report to training camp with their AAA team – coincidentally, the same year Jackie Robinson joined the Dodgers' AAA team, at the same position as Danielson.

But head won out over heart, as Danielson, a consummate storyteller, would say. He decided instead to return to IU for a job at the Alumni Association. While there, he served a one-year stint as interim head baseball coach.

In Indiana, he met Patricia Peterson, daughter of City Securities founder J. Dwight Peterson, whom Danielson knew through their mutual involvement in the Sigma Chi fraternity. Danny and Patty Danielson were married April 12, 1947. Patty Danielson preceded him in death in 2013.

Danielson joined the future Modernfold in 1948 as a dapper salesman, working his way up to a director on the board in 1958. He was elected president in 1969. Under Danielson's leadership, Modernfold became a division of American Standard.

But the job involved constant travel. When the Danielsons' third daughter left home to go to college, he changed careers to spend more time with his wife. He joined Indianapolis-based City Securities in 1976 and was elected vice chairman of the investment bank's board in 1981.

Danielson and his wife focused much of their philanthropy on giving back to their hometown of New Castle. After kick-starting giving toward an IU East satellite facility in New Castle, Danielson and his wife jointly received the Chancellor's Medallion for their service to the IU campus. The new branch, which opened in 1999, was named the Danielson Center in their honor.

The couple also led the effort to relocate the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame to New Castle in 1990 and spearheaded the development of the new Henry County YMCA in 2003.

For his involvement in his community, Danielson was twice named Citizen of the Year by the New Castle Chamber of Commerce, and in 2012, he and his wife jointly received the Henry County Foundation's Judy Melton Award for their commitment to their community.

Danielson also served as chairman of the Walther Cancer Foundation, sat on the board of governors for the Riley Children's Foundation, chaired the Fellowship of Christian Athletes' national board and served as a director of New Castle's Ameriana Bancorp.

In 1988, he received a Jefferson Award for public service through The Indianapolis Star. The Indianapolis Business Journal named him a 2004 Healthcare Hero. In 2007, the Rotary Club of Indianapolis named him Rotarian of the Year.

Danielson embodied true friendship. On holidays, his voice would boom out of his office as he called close friends to wish them well. He'd network and dish out advice in a packed schedule of breakfasts in New Castle, lunches in downtown Indianapolis and golf outings with friends and business partners.

A proud Republican, Danielson aided with the campaigns of Vice President Dan Quayle, Sen. Dan Coats and Gov. Mike Pence and was appointed by President George H.W. Bush to the Credit Standards Advisory Committee. In 2013, the Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site gave him its Advancing American Democracy award.

Danielson's involvement at Indiana University also continued throughout his life. Along with his trustee's position, he was a director of the IU Foundation and a member of the IU East board of advisors. The university honored him in 1994 with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. He also received an IU Distinguished Alumni Service award, a Thomas Hart Benton Medal, a President's Medal of Excellence, a Zora G. Clevenger Award for athletic contributions and the 2007 Herman B. Wells Visionary Award.

Three daughters followed Danielson to IU and, along with their husbands, carry on his legacy of giving and faith: Mary Johnson (Stan) of Quincy, Mass.; Susie Anderson (Duane) of Indianapolis; and Amy Thompson (Ron) of Kokomo, Ind.

Eight grandchildren also survive, along with their spouses. They're teaching 13 great-grandchildren to share their Go-Pa's love of sports, especially IU athletics.

Besides his wife, Danielson was preceded in death by his parents, Benjamin and Freda Holdhusen Danielson; his brother, John (Patty); and his sister,

Leanore von Grossman (Fritz).

The family will receive callers from 2 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, at Sproles Family Funeral Home, 2400 S. Memorial Drive, New Castle. (www.sprolesfamilycares.com)

A funeral service will be held at 2 p.m. Friday, May 15, at First Presbyterian Church, 1202 Church St., New Castle, where Danielson was an elder. Burial will follow in South Mound Cemetery, with military honors provided by contingents from the US Navy, American Legion and VFW.

Donations in his memory may be offered to the Indiana University Foundation, P.O. Box 6460, Indianapolis, IN 46206-6460; or the Henry County Community Foundation, P.O. Box 6006, New Castle, IN 47362.

The Sproles family and staff are honored to serve the family of Danny Danielson.

Cemetery Details

South Mound Cemetery

505 Bundy Ave.
New Castle, IN 47362
(765) 521-6850

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 14. 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Sproles Family Funeral Home
2400 S Memorial Dr
New Castle, IN 47362
(765) 521-2400
toms@sprolesfamilycares.com
<https://www.sprolesfamilycares.com/>

Service

MAY 15. 2:00 PM (ET)

First Presbyterian Church
1202 Church St.
New Castle, IN 47362

Tribute Wall

AA

“ Hi Susie. Your dad meant so much to so many people and was the epitome of a Christian and philanthropist. To you and your sisters, though, he was "Dad." I drove to my dad's gravesite yesterday, and all of a sudden I noticed all of these beautiful flowers. It was your parents' gravesite. I know you miss them. What a beautiful family. Thinking of you, Duane, your kids, your sisters, and their families. With sympathy and friendship, Anne Bouslog Ash

Anne (Bouslog) Ash - May 19, 2015 at 05:52 PM

JB

“ The family of LaVaughn and Floyd Bailey send sincere condolences to the family of Danny Danielson. We, the children, spouses and grandchildren knew of both Mr. and Mrs. Danielson through LaVaughn (Mother and Grandmother) who worked very hard for many years and was a wonderful seamstress who got to know Mrs. Danielson and the family very well. We are all so grateful for the kindness and generosity shown to her by setting up two sustaining scholarships in her name, a tremendous honor and we thank your parents for this wonderful tribute. We know this community and state of Indiana will miss Danny Danielson greatly. He left quite a legacy.

Sincerely, the children Gene (Judy), Linda (Ronnie), Jim (Nancy), Ronnie (Wanda), their children and grandchildren.

Judy Bailey - May 16, 2015 at 03:15 PM

CO

“ I would like to thank the Danielson Family:
What an Honor to have been part of your
parents life.
A Joy To Take Care Of, I learnt a lot from
being part of
their lives. Memories I will always cherish.
May Angels Be With You All Today and Always.
Love Carmen Orr



Carmen Orr - May 16, 2015 at 08:50 AM

VF

“ Susie...my thoughts and prayers are with you and your family...you
were blessed with wonderful parents and I remember fondly the
times I spent in your home...may the Lord bless you and give you
comfort...love you Vicki Collins Fairchild

Vicki Fairchild - May 14, 2015 at 08:11 PM



“ Heavenly and Harmony was purchased for the
family of Donald C. Danielson.



May 14, 2015 at 01:44 PM

SM

“ Susie, My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. You
were so lucky to have a father like him and for so many years. Take
care of yourself. Sandy Jarvis Maple

Sandy Jarvis Maple - May 14, 2015 at 01:03 PM

PS

“ I was very blessed to have known Danny through Hall of Fame meetings and events. His passion for life and for "doing right" has made a big impact in my life. What a great impact he made on so many, and his contributions to basketball is unrivaled, I believe, in the state of Indiana.

*Rest in Peace My Friend.
and THANK YOU!*

Pete Smith

Pete Smith - May 13, 2015 at 11:13 AM

BR

“ Danny is an amazing man with deep, solid roots that will continue to grow and blossom in our community and in the hearts of those who were privileged to know him and blessed to be with him. Our thoughts and prayers are with his beloved family.

Looking forward to coffee in Jerusalem some sweet day!

Becky Reagan

Becky Reagan - May 13, 2015 at 10:15 AM

AF

“ Aszure Gray & the ADVISA Family purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Donald C. Danielson.



Aszure Gray & the ADVISA Family - May 13, 2015 at 09:56 AM

DW

“ I first knew Danny and Patty through the Presbyterian Church when I was in junior high. They were both always gracious and had wonderful smiles. I have much enjoyed in later years keeping up with the family via the wonderful Christmas cards. Sending thoughts and prayers at your time of loss....Diane (Groves) Wendell

Diane Wendell - May 13, 2015 at 09:27 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Indiana Governor Mike Pence Condolences



Sproles Family Funeral Home - May 12, 2015 at 08:46 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Donald C. Danielson.



May 12, 2015 at 01:18 PM

RD

“ To the family of Danny Danielson

I had the privilege of working with Danny for ten years, as the executive director of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame. Danny knew how to get things done and he was filled with outstanding ideas and wisdom on how projects could be completed successfully. Although he possessed endless enthusiasm for any project he did not force his will on others. Being a natural leader others were excited to follow his lead and to be a team player on a winning team.

I have been privileged to meet a number of noted individuals in a variety of professions. Without a doubt Danny and Coach John Wooden are the two most remarkable men I have ever met. Their personalities, leadership skills, organization and enthusiasm easily puts them in a remarkable class by themselves.

Danny's Christian attitude was an example to all that we are answerable to higher power, Jesus Christ. He talked the talk and walked the walk.

Unfortunately grief is for those that are left behind. Hopefully you can find comfort knowing the Danny and Patty are happily serving a higher cause.

God bless!

Roger Dickinson

Roger Dickinson - May 11, 2015 at 01:16 PM

AB

“ Thank you Mr. Danielson for all that you created, improved, and shared with us around you. I think of you often with warmth, happiness, and appreciation. It has been almost 50 years since you and I spoke at length, but those good memories and feelings will last with me forever.

alan bailey - May 10, 2015 at 11:18 PM

JR

“ He always had a smile and hello for everyone he met. He and your mother were the most generous and caring couple. "Death ends a life but it does not end a relationship."

Jim Robbins - May 09, 2015 at 09:02 AM

VJ

“ Danny and his beloved wife Patty were life changers to many of us. They taught me in Sunday school that we are blessed to be a blessing and this has been my hearts desire ever since. They lived that scripture daily! Danny through his love and support is the reason I was blessed enough obtain my love of nursing for 30 years. He was always so kind and cared to ask how you are doing every time he saw you. EVERYONE needs to be as Danny, Patty and their family lived. They all were and are a blessing and I thank God above for ALL of them. Bless them dear Jesus as we celebrate the life of this great man and family....Amen!

Vicki Johnson - May 09, 2015 at 08:43 AM

AL

“ I have had many great life teachers. Danny Danielson was one of those who change the direction of my life. I was working at Modernfold in New Castle where I started as a drafter the summer after my Junior year. I was only 16 when I started. I worked there a total of 7 years. Danny was President.

Modernfold was loosing a lot of young people to Vietnam and Danny called about seven us into an office and offered to pay for us to go to college so we could get a student deferment. We were all relative poor so he even offered to pay up front, including books and supplies. I had not planned on going to college and hadn't even taken the SAT. My high school grades were so poor I had to start on academic probation.

The deal was that we had to go to school full time (12 hours) at night and work full time at Modernfold during the day. It was tough. As far as I know, I'm the only one who finished. I then went on to get an MBA and a Master's in Engineering. I sent Danny a letter a few years ago reminding him of the story and telling him how much I appreciated it. His response was "I have tried to create many fishermen."

Thank you Danny for the positive impact you had on so many!

Alan Leduc

Alan Leduc - May 08, 2015 at 06:40 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Donald C. Danielson.



May 08, 2015 at 03:34 PM

MW

“ *Mr. Danielson was a respected man in our community. I had the privledge of knowing him and Patty and they were wonderful people. May God give the family strength during this difficult time.*

Marilyn J. Ward-Sullivan - May 08, 2015 at 03:31 PM

DM

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with the Danielson family. A life lived working and giving to others. I am thankful to have known him and appreciate all he did for Indiana University and the Sigma Chi Fraternity.*

Dave Morrow - May 08, 2015 at 01:55 PM

HB

“ *There isn't enough space to say all that needs to be said about Danny. Just look around New Castle and all of the things that were successful and made an impact on our community. Together Danny and Patty wanted to make things happened because they loved New Castle. Judy and I always enjoyed the annual Christmas Card because it helped keep track of the entire family and the number of children in the family. Danny earned credit where credit was due and as I read the obituary this morning it reminded me as well as Judy what a person can do if they keep in mind that "It is amazing what you can accomplish when you don't care who gets the credit"!!! Mary, Susie and Amy you have had a wonderful father. Be thankful for the so many years he has been with you and cherish those memories. God Bless all of you. Herb & Judy Bunch*

Herb & Judy Bunch - May 08, 2015 at 11:28 AM

CD

“ *Mr. Danielson was a life time mentor to me. I worked for him delivering mail within Modernfold (before email!) during summers while in college. He stayed in touch with me throughout my career and offered support at pivotal times. He was truly exceptional an person. I admired him greatly and am saddened by his passing. God bless him and his family.*

Carol D'Amico

Carol D'Amico - May 08, 2015 at 09:32 AM

MB

“ *Mr Danielson made an impact on New Castle and his contributions will live on into perpetuity. May God provide comfort to the Danielson Family during this time of sorrow. God Bless....*

Mark Bates - May 08, 2015 at 07:13 AM

AD

“ *So many wonderful memories running in and out of the Danielson home with Amy. What loving, kind, caring examples of faith, family, and others first! The lives both Danny and Patty touched will never been known in this lifetime. God's richest blessings and comfort to all three girls and their families.*

*Angie (Neal) Deel
Nashville, Tennessee*

Angie Neal Deel - May 07, 2015 at 10:39 PM

CK

“ *New Castle has lost a Giant. He was such a great man, and a big part of our lives. Our hearts go out to the Danielson kids. From the Chambers kids.*

cathy kennedy - May 07, 2015 at 05:20 PM

MC

“ I have been so proud for many years to call Danny my friend. I have not known anyone who had so many positive personal characteristics. A great man.

Marvin Cave - May 07, 2015 at 03:54 PM

JW

“ Danny and wife, Patty, were two of the most beautiful, benevolent people I have ever known! This community is a much better place as a result.
For thirteen years straight they hosted a beautiful Christmas party in their home to which we were always invited, and it was at one of those parties, that Danny told me that the Lord had healed him! He certainly was never afraid to discuss his beautiful relationship with his Lord!
I've watched his lights from across the woods every morning and evening from my kitchen window and felt assured that all was 'OK', but strangely not this morning.
Many of us will miss their annual Christmas greetings giving credit and gratitude to their Lord and Savior while sharing updates about their beautiful family. Now, together with his beautiful wife, Patty...whom Danny always said: "was proud to be her husband"
What a MAN, in every sense of the word. My heart is so full of gratitude for having had the privilege of knowing him!

Joyce Wilhelm - May 07, 2015 at 02:54 PM

SS

“ Most optimistic person I ever met, charm and had a lot of class. Im honored to have worked with him at City Securities and have known him. Go IU

Steve Wells/City Securities - May 07, 2015 at 11:56 AM



I always appreciated how Danny loved the Hall O Fame and how well he treated all of us. George Griffith

George Griffith - May 12, 2015 at 06:36 PM