

David P. Gardner

March 24, 1933 ~ January 2, 2024

David Pierpont Gardner, 90, former President of the University of California and the University of Utah, passed away peacefully on January 2, 2024 at his home in Park City, Utah, surrounded by his loved ones.

David was born in Berkeley, Calif., on March 24, 1933 to Reed Snow Gardner and Margaret Pierpont Gardner. David was raised by his stepmother, Allie Dixon Gardner, following the passing of Margaret. On June 27, 1958, David married Elizabeth Fuhriman Gardner (Libby). After Libby's passing he married Sheila Sprague Gardner on December 27, 1995.

David attended Berkeley High School and completed his undergraduate work at BYU, followed by two years in the Army after the Korean War. Upon his honorable discharge, David earned his MA in political science and PhD in higher education from UC Berkeley.

In 1966, David served as Assistant Chancellor and then Vice Chancellor at UC Santa Barbara, and eventually as Vice President for the UC system. In 1973, David became President of the University of Utah, where he served until 1983 and was known for his visionary leadership and widely credited with leading the University through a significant period of progress and growth.

David also served as a visiting fellow in England at Cambridge University's Clare Hall and chaired the National Commission on Excellence in Education, which published its finding in the 1983 landmark report, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.

David was appointed President of the UC's 10-campus system in 1983. During his decade-long tenure, he made a significant impact on UC's position on the world-stage and on its growth and influence in the state of California.

After his retirement from UC, David was active on various boards, including the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, George S. and Dolores Eccles Foundation, J. Paul Getty Trust, Fluor Corporation, Huntsman Cancer Foundation, OC Tanner Lectures on Human Values, and The Nature Conservancy.

In 2005, at the request of UC Berkeley, David published his acclaimed memoir "Earning My Degree: Memoirs of an American University President."

David is survived by his wife, Sheila Sprague Gardner; and his children, Shari Olmstead and her husband, Eric, Lisa Pattenaude and her husband, Blair, Marci Dunne and her husband, Patrick, Karen Dee and her husband, David; stepson, Matthew Rodgers and his wife, Caroline; his sister, Vilate Trussel; his brothers, Reed Gardner and Jim Gardner; and seventeen beloved grandchildren. There will be two memorials honoring David:

Salt Lake City, Utah - A Tribute to David will be held on Friday, January 12, 2024 at 11:00 a.m., in the University of Utah's David P. Gardner Hall. Livestream available at https://www.utah.edu/live/

Berkeley, Calif. - A Celebration of Life will be held on Friday, January 19, 2024 at 4:30 p.m., at The Faculty Club on the University of California, Berkeley campus.

Donations in David's honor, may be made to the Huntsman Cancer Foundation whose mission he was passionate about. More information at Legacy.com.