

Joseph Vernelle Phillips Obit.  
(March 23, 1930 - December 24, 2005)

Virginia Beach, VA



Joseph Vernelle Phillips, 75, of the 1000 block of Amherst Lane passed away peacefully Saturday, December 24, 2005 in his residence. Born in Ft. Morgan, Colorado, he was the son of the late Ralph O. Gentry and Arzetta S. Gentry and was predeceased by his sister, Shirley V. Tilton, his brother, Jack McKinney, two foster sons, Ho "Michael" Odom and Seri "David" Tang. Mr. Phillips retired after 39 years, as a staff writer for the *Virginian Pilot*. He was an art history, genealogy and writing expert. His passions led him all over the world to study and enjoy the history of art and religion. Survivors include three foster grandsons, Vuthy Oum of Virginia Beach, Sovirak Oum and Michael Tang; and five foster granddaughters, Chanpapha Oum, Vannary Tang, Vannarian Tang, Julie Chang and Monica Chang; his foster son, Hyon "Scott" Chang of Seattle, Washington; a brother-in-law, Donald Tilton; a sister-in-law, Leona McKinney two nieces, JoAnne Yoder and Rene Scroxton and a nephew, Eric Tilton as well as two-grand nieces, Jo Louise Yoder and Briana Scoxton and three great-nephews, Matthew Yoder, Justin Tilton and Jacob Tilton.

The funeral service will be conducted at 11:00 a.m., Thursday, December 29, 2005 at the Great Bridge Chapel of Oman Funeral Home & Crematory, 653 Cedar Road, Chesapeake. Father Cristiano Brito will officiate. The interment will follow in Colonial Grove Memorial Park. The family will receive friends from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., Wednesday at the funeral home.

Former Pilot reporter covered wide range of stories  
The *Virginian-Pilot*  
© December 27, 2005

VIRGINIA BEACH — Joseph V. Phillips, a reporter and editor at *The Virginian-Pilot* for almost 40 years, died Saturday. He was 75.

Phillips, who started at the newspaper in 1956, covered a wide range of beats, including business, the city of Chesapeake, police, education and features.

“He was a very diligent reporter,” said Tony Stein, a columnist for *The Pilot’s* Chesapeake Clipper community tabloid. Stein worked with Phillips in Chesapeake.

“He was very careful with his facts,” Stein said. “I always admired his ability to go after a story and tell it well.”

During the 1960s, Phillips wrote about funding issues in Chesapeake and later covered problems facing Virginia Electric & Power Co.

He was a feature writer for a time and edited a youth-oriented supplement called Action.

Stein remembered Phillips as a friendly man who knew how to dress and could often be found in the newspaper's smoking area.

"He was a very gentlemanly person, with a good sense of humor," Stein said.

Phillips traveled the world pursuing his passions for art history, religion, genealogy and writing.

He was predeceased by his brother, Jack McKinney; a sister, Shirley V. Tilton; and two foster sons, Ho "Michael" Odom and Seri "David" Tang. He is survived by three foster grandsons and five foster granddaughters.

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Oman Funeral Home Guestbook:

**Audrey Lambert**

Sterling Heights, MI

January 8, 2006 1:09 AM

To the family of Joseph Vernelle Gentry: This is part of Joseph Vernelle Gentry's roots. Robert Gentry I (Revolutionary War Veteran & First Families of Tennessee) md Judith Joyner =

Bartlett Gentry md Elizabeth Whitman =

Robert Gentry II md Nancy Harris =

Silas Whitney/William Gentry (md 1st Mary Jane Kerr Lindsey) md 2nd Irena Asenath Allison, d/o Minelick Joe & Aseneth Stone Allison =

Robert "Bob" Oscar Gentry (md 1st Nancy A. Waller) – (md 2nd Ollie Frances Maxwell)

–md 3rd Eliza Arilla Carr – (md 4th Amanda Jane Gentry) =

Ralph Ogle Gentry, s/o Robert "Bob" Oscar Gentry & Eliza Arilla Carr md Arzetta Slane (Ralph Ogle Gentry alias Charles McKinney) =

Joseph Vernelle Gentry (changed his last name to Phillips from his stepfather Darrell Austin Phillips)

Joe and I exchanged e-mails for quite a while and discussed his ideas for writing a book on the Gentry and related families. Joe got started on that book but it will never be published. He was quite the character and fun to e-mail and get his life stories first hand.

Miss you Joe!

Audrey June Denny Lambert

**Cheryl Hughes**

Virginia Beach

January 4, 2006 11:43 AM

Woody, I am sorry to hear about your loss. I know how much your Grandfather meant to you. May you find much love in your heart with all the good memories of the time you spent with him. You and your family are in my thoughts. Cheryl Hughes Greenbrier Country Club

**Henry W. Gould**

Morgantown, V

December 30, 2005 1:18 PM

I was very saddened to learn of Joe's passing. I first met Joe Phillips when we were students together at the University way back starting in 1948! Joe was then 'Joy' and he was exploring different religions, trying to understand himself and the vast universe. We studied philosophy and religion. He came in one day and said he had become 'Joseph' as he had become a Catholic. One episode tells more about how he came to love people and being such a caring guy. He complained one night a dinner that he was short of money to pay his rent. When he went to his apartment that night he found an envelope under his pillow from the UVA Secret Seven Society - inside was \$250.00 for his rent. We never knew who in the Sevens did this, but it solidified our trust that we should care for others. Joe was good man, and a good friend. He will always be missed until some day in Heaven when we all will rejoice. - Henry Gould

**Connie Sage**

Edenton, N.C.

December 29, 2005 9:44 PM

It was with great sadness to read of Joe's death. As one of his Chesapeake editors for many years, I was constantly amazed at Joe's knowledge of art (and of the world, for that matter). I have fond memories of his careful and steadfast coverage of the local business community. His death is a great loss to all of us. Please accept my sincere sympathy. Connie Sage

**Mary Beth Dale**

Norfolk, VA

December 29, 2005 10:54 AM

I was privileged to work with Joe Phillips when he was Business Editor for the Virginian Pilot and I was the public relations representative for a large bank headquartered in Norfolk. I will always remember him as a true gentleman. He was an extremely intelligent and well traveled man, with a big and kind heart. I extend my sincere sympathies to his family and loved ones.

**Don Goldberg**

Suffolk, Va.

December 27, 2005 9:00 PM

MY condolences go out to all of Joe's extended family. Joe was my good friend and I'll miss him greatly. I have many fond memories of our many conversations about life,

travel and his many interested. He was the most knowledgeable gentleman I've ever known. I hope to be able to speak at his funeral.

**Janine Bolen Kerouac**

Manchester, NH

December 27, 2005 10:31 AM

I am the daughter of Grace and Frank Bolen, dear friends of Joe. Uncle Joe, as we called him, is my God Father. My thoughts and prayers are with his family. I know he was sick for quite a long time. I know Vuthy took great care of him. Again my prayers are with you. God Bless you all.

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