



Phillip Joseph Dibartolomeo

May 10, 1964 - January 13, 2026

“Surf’s Up! The waves are gnarly at Rincon” – a phrase our beloved son, brother, husband, father, and friend can no longer say. He lost his battle with the flu and pneumonia on Jan 13th in the MICU at SB Cottage Hospital.

Phil was born in Connecticut, but moved to Santa Barbara with his family in 1968, later graduating from Santa Barbara High School and Pepperdine University. This is where he developed his passion and purpose for the ocean and surfing. He tried various jobs and skills, but opening his surfboard shop, Rippin Stix, became his focus until his untimely death.

Phil married Andrea Moreno in Santa Barbara in 1991 and had two wonderful children, Adam and Lily, in 1995 and 2001. He remarried to Kathy Jo “KJ” Watson in 2005, with whom he moved to Oxnard to live out much of his life.

Phil always marched to a different drummer; skeptical and often misunderstood others, but stood firm for the ones he loved. He found happiness and salvation in the ocean, on the beach, and in tending to plants and animals he would bring home.

Phil is survived by his mother, Erica; his brother, Raymond, sister-in-law, Dana, and nephews, Brody and Owen; his children, Adam and Lily; the mother of his children, Andrea; his wife, KJ, and her extended family; and

many close relatives on Long Island, NY.

Viewing will be held on January 22nd at Welch-Ryce-Haider (450 Ward Drive, Santa Barbara) from 9:30 am, with a service from 1-3 pm.

Previous Events

Viewing

JAN **22**. 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Goleta
450 Ward Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93111
(805) 965-5145
info@wrhsb.com
<https://www.wrhsb.com>

Funeral Service

JAN **22**. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Goleta
450 Ward Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93111
(805) 965-5145
info@wrhsb.com
<https://www.wrhsb.com>

Tribute Wall

GP

“ More photos of Phil & KJ & friends



Gail Watson Phillips - January 21 at 09:44 PM

KJ

Stoked 🌺

KJ - January 24 at 07:54 PM

“ Our hearts goes out to all of the DiBartolomeo family, especially my sister Kathy Jo “KJ” Watson DiBartolomeo, Phil’s wife for the past 20 years. As we all mourn the early loss of our brother-in-law with his beautiful smile and gentle heart, we celebrate his ‘Wonderful Life’.

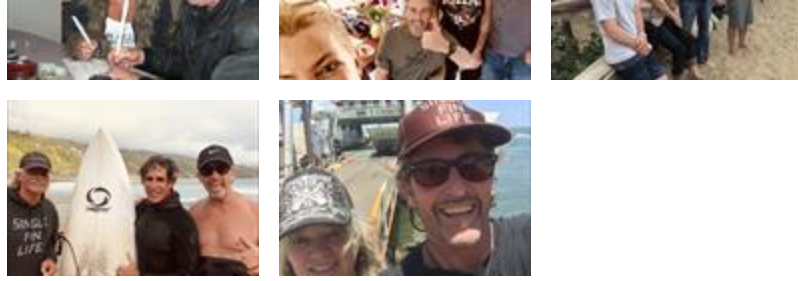
Phil was a high energy person with an analytical mind who adored his children Adam and Lily and wife KJ, above all else. While he had interesting professions over the years where his salesmanship reigned supreme – probably due to that welcoming smile and his charming ways – his heart belonged on the ocean, on a surfboard, or on the job making and repairing surfboards along the southern California coasts.

He was never far from the ocean! He met KJ in Hawaii when both attended a mutual friend’s wedding, they married on the beach in Montecito, and when his not so dream job of selling tools at Home Depot (he was a top seller!!) sent Phil and KJ to Hilo, Hawaii’s Home Depot, he was in his dream element of a good job and endless surfing. More recent years living just miles from the world-famous surf beach at Rincon Point he returned to his real love of building and repairing surf boards, an off-shoot from his earlier Santa Barbara business RippinStix where his skills are revered by many local surfers.

He will be sadly missed by all who knew him as his heart was always in the right place and surfing was the glue that held him together. When you next drive down Hwy 101 in SoCal and pass Rincon Point in Ventura County, raise a toast to his spirit surely out there on the waves waving back at you with that gorgeous grin on his face.

All our love – Gail Watson Phillips & Allen Phillips (sister & brother-in-laws)

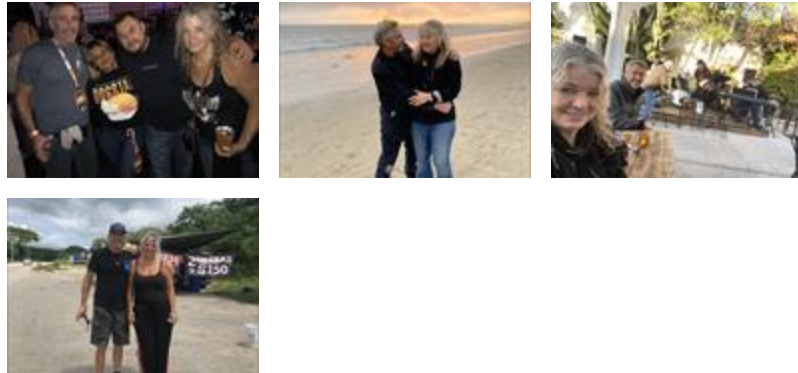




Gail Watson Phillips - January 21 at 09:40 PM

NW

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Nancy Watson - January 21 at 09:17 AM

NW

“ It is with great sorrow that I write these sad words about Phil’s sudden & premature passing from our world. Nothing will be the same without him in our lives. Just unbelievable loss.
As his mother-in-law, I can’t forget his sweet & kind calls over the years - full of gentle enthusiasm & love for me & his wife, Kathy- who we both loved so much. I was so grateful for that contact. Now we’ll have the memories of his amazing life in our hearts! And inspire us to be kind & live a full life, too.
My sincere condolences to his brother Ray & his family - & son , Adam & daughter Lily & Erica, his mother. And step-mother, Maxine. May many happy memories sustain his wife Kathy through these difficult days & months.
We miss you already, Phil . Thanks for being you!
Much love..Nancy Watson & Co. Neil, Gail, Julia, Kathy, & Amanda, my granddaughter.

Nancy Watson - January 20 at 08:38 PM

KJ

Beautiful. We miss him.

KJ - January 21 at 09:17 PM

KJ

“ Phil at Rincon with all these RippinStix boards he made.Sweet...



KJ - January 17 at 10:29 PM

NW

Beautiful scene - Phil being in his element!

Nancy Watson - January 20 at 03:01 PM

NW

It's nice to remember Phil in his 'Happy Place'. His passing was much too soon, he was too young. 😞 Condolences to all family,

Neil Watson - January 20 at 08:04 PM

KJ

“ *Phillip's Zebra Board. One of his favorites.* 🏄♂️



KJ - January 17 at 10:12 PM

NW

A vibrant memory & wonderful photo. Love it!

Nancy Watson - January 20 at 08:44 PM

NW

A great memory to keep in our hearts forever more.

Nancy Watson - January 21 at 09:09 AM