



David J. Spencer

NOV 8, 1966 - DEC 17, 2024



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It is with great sadness that we announce that David Spencer passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family, on December 17, 2024, in Miami, at the age of 58. Son of Barbara Spencer, a marriage and family therapist, and Gary Spencer, a Syracuse University Professor of Sociology, David was born in Boston and raised in Manlius, New York. David's life was shaped by a deep entrepreneurial spirit, a strong sense of adventure, fierce independence, a sharp wit, tremendous vision, and a passion for connecting people across the world. A distinguished 1984 graduate of Fayetteville-Manlius High School, David began his entrepreneurial career in high school, starting his own DJ business spinning tunes for local parties and events, and for his beloved high school youth group CNYFTY. He continued to run this business throughout college at Cornell University, where he graduated in three years with a Bachelor's degree in Industrial & Labor Relations. From there, David moved to New York City, where he launched a career that would span continents and industries. David's professional journey took him across Asia, where he lived and worked for over 30 years in Japan, Singapore, Thailand, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Hong Kong. His roles were as diverse as they were impactful — at Morgan Stanley, he helped bring over 1 million phone lines to rural Thailand, and played a pivotal role in groundbreaking projects across Asia. His time at Procter & Gamble saw him help introduce goods like Crest toothpaste and Pringles potato chips to Vietnam after the U.S. embargo was lifted. At GE Capital, David built a \$7 billion global restructuring business and facilitated a seminal M&A transaction between GE, Mizuho, and Heller Financial. David's entrepreneurial vision led him to co-found one of Asia's first private equity fund-of-funds, Emerald Hill Capital Partners, where he also served as Managing Director. For a brief period of time, he even managed a Korean pop band. David recently served as acting CEO of Maprao, an organic coconut water business in Thailand, and as a Managing Director and Senior Advisor for STS Capital Partners,



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a global investment bank catering to entrepreneurs. Throughout his career, David continued to seek out new and bold opportunities that left a lasting impact on people and industries around the world. Everywhere he went, David built deep and lasting. David's friends and colleagues described him as a generous mentor, an inspiration, and a visionary. He was known as a connector, sponsor, and advisor who always made time for others. His relationships were not just professional but deeply personal, as he treated friends across the globe as family and vice-versa. Over time, the family members of those friends became like family to him, too, and they cared for each other tremendously. David lived life to its fullest — he loved to travel the world, explore new cultures, and experience the finest food and wine. He was a true connoisseur, inducted into prestigious wine societies like the Commanderie du Bordeaux and the Knights of Alba, and he founded Hong Kong Wine Geeks. David also had a passion for collecting paintings, sculptures and other unique works created by local artists around the world, with a particular eye for Southeast Asian art. His curated art collection is truly a marvel. Whether connecting new friends with old ones or embarking on new adventures, David was bold, larger-than-life, and always willing to take risks. David shared his love of travel with his family, taking his parents around the world over the decades to bring them into his community in Asia. David also brought his siblings, nieces/nephews, and cousins to some of his favorite cities and restaurants around the world. He was never happier than when on an adventure with those he loved, sharing fine wine, captivating conversation, and exceptional food. An active member and leader of the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO), David was a founding member of several YPO chapters across Asia. He completed the YPO leadership ladder in his home chapter and served as Regional Chair for Southeast Asia. David also chaired multiple YPO networks, including the Art, Deal, and Financial Services Networks, and served as the Asia Wine Network Chair. More recently, David found meaningful connections to his heritage through YPO Mosaic. David sponsored dozens if not hundreds of professionals to join his network in YPO, making introductions and facilitating



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successful connections for mentees. Beyond his professional accomplishments, David was dedicated to philanthropy. He was actively involved in organizations like Auction Napa Valley, Mother's Choice, Room to Read, and Pathfinders, a charity focused on protecting vulnerable children in Hong Kong. His deep sense of generosity and desire to make the world a better place were reflected in his commitment to causes that touched lives across the globe. David earned degrees from Cornell University (BS), the Wharton School of Business (MBA in Finance and Entrepreneurship), and The University of Pennsylvania's Lauder Institute (MA). Fluent in English, Japanese, and Indonesian, with a touch of Thai, David's global perspective shaped everything he did.

David is survived by his mother, Barbara Spencer (Gary Spencer, deceased), his 3 younger siblings, Abby Spencer (married to Scott Starenchak), Liz Rosenthal (married to Mark Rosenthal), and Steven Spencer (married to Dana Spencer), and 9 nieces and nephews who adored their Uncle David. He also leaves behind hundreds of friends who became family, and family members who became friends, from across the globe, all of whom will forever cherish his memory, his spirit, his wisdom, and his sense of adventure.

Memorial information is available at www.forevermissed.com/david-j-spencer. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a gift in Memory of David Spencer to: Catholic Hospice of Miami whose team, including a Jewish Rabbi, lovingly cared for David in his final days www.catholichealthservices.org/donate or The "Undergraduate Sociology Paper Award" at Syracuse University, which is presented annually in memory of David's father, Dr. Gary Spencer, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, to the student submitting the best undergraduate Sociology paper. You may contribute online at Dr. Gary Spencer Sociology Undergraduate Paper Award (scroll down to Sociology Department Fund, select "my gift is a tribute", and then list David and Gary Spencer) or to one of these Hong Kong organizations that were also very important to David: Mother's Choice, which serves the many children without families and pregnant teenagers in Hong Kong Mother's Choice | Better Care Network Pathfinders, which helps comfort and care for children born to migrant mothers Homepage - Pathfinders Hong Kong or Autism Partners



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Foundation Home - Autism Partnership Foundation. David's legacy as a son, brother, uncle, mentor, leader, visionary, and friend will live on in the many lives he touched. His spirit of adventure, love of life, generosity, and dedication to others will never be forgotten. Rest in peace, David. You will be dearly missed and forever remembered. May your memory always be a blessing. Arrangements by Levitt-Weinstein Blasberg-Rubin-Zilbert Memorial Chapel (305) 932-2700.



Tribute Wall

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Ric Wilken posted:

David was a good friend. I met him on one of his many trips from HongKong to Bali. I live on Bali full time for the past 20 years. David gave me his Bali villa to use for my wedding 13 years ago. Over the years we had a great and happy time on Bali. I'm really sad to hear he past. Ric Wilken 62 8113891267 or ricwilken@yahoo.com

February 28 at 1:53 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring David by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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