



Phillip Leroy Senger

July 22, 1944 - June 14, 2025

Phillip Leroy Senger ("PL")

Born July 22, 1944 – June 14, 2025

Phillip Leroy Senger, affectionately known as “PL,” was born on July 22, 1944 in Naponee, Indiana to Marvin and Mary Ellen Senger and passed away peacefully at age 80 in Bend, Oregon on June 14, 2025.

PL was a beloved father, passionate educator, lifelong learner, and exceptional friend. He was known for his boundless energy, tenacity, and legendary sense of humor. His infectious enthusiasm and eternal optimism touched all who knew him and he often reminded those around him that we should all laugh and smile a little more.

PL was the proud father of three daughters: Amy and her husband Matt, Molly and her husband Mike, and Sally and partner Ross, whom he raised with their mother, Martha. Together, PL and Martha shared great pride in the family they built. He was a devoted grandfather to Saige and Miles, children of Amy and Matt. He also had a very special “adopted” Paraguayan son, Juan Martín.

He was a fun brother and uncle, and the constant cheerleader of everyone he loved. He was always quick with encouragement, praise, or a proud story to share. PL treasured his family and friends deeply and was especially close to

his best friend and “brother from another mother,” Dr. Ken Spitzer, and his wife, Dr. Diana Stafforini.

As a proud 1966 graduate of North Carolina State University and an unwavering fan of Wolfpack basketball, PL carried his school spirit with him throughout his life. He earned both his master’s and doctoral degrees from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

While in graduate school, PL served in the U.S. Army near the end of the Vietnam War. Stationed in Denver, Colorado, he was assigned to the U.S. Army Nutrition Lab, where his expertise with the electron microscope led him to support research in the pathology lab.

He began his academic career at Washington State University in 1974, later serving as a professor of dairy physiology at Pennsylvania State University. He returned to WSU in 1984 and was appointed full professor in 1985. His teaching career spanned over 30 years. PL authored more than 200 scientific, educational, and popular press papers. He received five teaching awards, including the American Society of Animal Science Distinguished Teaching Award in 1998 and the Marion E. Smith Faculty Achievement Award in 2005, as well as two national awards for research in reproductive physiology. His textbook, *Pathways to Pregnancy and Parturition*, became a cornerstone in reproductive physiology education and was used in over 140 colleges and universities.

PL’s love for travel went hand in hand with his fascination for cultures around the world. Through food, language, and shared experiences, he sought to understand and celebrate the diversity he encountered.

He was a phenomenal cook and the proud author of *Take Time to Smell the Aromas*, a cookbook he published in two editions. He loved fine dining just as much as he loved discovering a “hole-in-the-wall/rot gut” roadside meal. He

relished both with equal excitement! Known for his love of barbecue and his prized green egg, he would often be found grilling even in a full snowstorm.

His interests were wide-ranging, and he lived by the motto: “Go big or go home.” For PL, more was always better!! He enjoyed downhill skiing, stargazing, gardening (with a plot big enough to feed the whole town). He proudly wore his signature cowboy hat during many of these adventures, adding a little flair wherever he went. PL was also an enthusiastic Seattle Mariners fan. He loyally followed the M’s by showing unwavering optimism regardless of the season’s record.

He helped his young daughters start Strawberry Hill, a u-pick, custom-pick strawberry business, set on their 11-acre Palouse property. The goal was to teach them work ethic and help pad their college accounts. The idea was begrudgingly accepted by them in their youth but later became a foundational experience which cemented hustle, grit, and the deep satisfaction that comes from hard work.

Over the years, PL took countless fishing trips with his closest friends. Adventures included the Snake River, Alaska, Canada, Utah, Montana, Patagonia, and the Deschutes River. He cherished these journeys not just for the fishing, but for the camaraderie. He often said he enjoyed the bullshitting just as much as the craft itself. His hours spent laughing, storytelling, and solving the world’s problems (or making up new ones) were just as valuable as landing the perfect cast.

Later in life, PL found great joy in woodworking by learning from his mentor and close friend Lee Barker. He crafted everything from dining tables to lovingly made rocking chairs. His creations were works of art, each piece infused with care and craftsmanship. His family and friends will forever cherish

these lasting symbols of his love and creativity.

PL loved to calculate things, often pulling out a calculator mid-conversation to crunch numbers just for fun. Whether it was, “How many runs do you suppose we could get in today at Mt. Bachelor?” or “How many pounds of strawberries can one person pick in an hour?” He brought a curious, enthusiastic, and usually competitive energy to everyday problems. For him, numbers were part of the fun and no topic was too small to analyze.

More than anything, PL will be remembered for the joy he brought to life, the curiosity he brought to learning, and the care he showed to literally everyone he met. His life was a beautiful balance of intellect, kindness, and humor.

He will count on all of us to carry forward his “HELL YES” attitude and he will be deeply missed.

For details and to RSVP for PL’s celebration of life, please visit the following link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezfOnGO9743DWcZIn9w578vjkNP8NvtI2-b9oqpay9HR1rew/viewform?usp=header>

We are also honored to announce the establishment of the Dr. P.L. Senger Memorial Scholarship at Washington State University. This fund celebrates his legacy of excellence in teaching and his deep commitment to students. If you feel moved to honor PL’s life and impact as an educator, we would be grateful for contributions made in his memory. All donations are tax-deductible and will directly support future students in the undergraduate Animal Sciences department.

https://foundation.wsu.edu/give/?fund=5dac8a8e-80d2-45ff-9d37-1cefe065791e&cat=idonate_colleges&area=idonate_agricultural_human_and_natural_resource_sciences&utm_campaign=dr-ph-senger-family-scholarship-in-animal-sc

iences

Niswonger-Reynolds Funeral Home of Bend was honored to serve the family.

Tribute Wall

KC

“ Kelli (Shrope) Campbell purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Phillip Leroy Senger.



Kelli (Shrope) Campbell - August 17, 2025 at 04:57 PM

MG

“ I spent a lot of time in my life fishing and laughing with Phil. He was one of a kind and will be missed.

Mike Griswold - July 21, 2025 at 05:47 PM

FB

“ I first met Phil in 1966 or 1967 when he was an undergraduate student at North Carolina State University working in the laboratory of Dr. L.C. Ulberg on an undergraduate research project. I helped him examine the effects of reducing blood flow to uteri of mice and found that cauterizing arteries near the junction of the oviduct and uterus probably damaged nerves as well and, consequently, the embryos were not transported into the uterus. We had many other interactions over the years and he will always be remembered by thousands of students who used his book as a text for courses in reproductive biology and many hundreds of faculty who used that resource for teaching. My condolences to his family on their loss of a special man. Fuller W. Bazer

Fuller W. Bazer - July 17, 2025 at 03:22 PM

SG

“ *"Uncle Phil" as my family would address him as, left an amazing legacy and made huge contributions to the educational community. Our thoughts and prayers are with the whole Senger family during this difficult time. Rest in love, P.L!*

Sonja G - July 04, 2025 at 03:39 PM

SG

“ *Sonja G lit a candle in memory of Phillip Leroy Senger*



Sonja G - July 04, 2025 at 02:52 PM

BR

“ *PL, Although I never knew you personally, I know one of your daughters Molly and feel like I know you through her beautiful stories she has shared with me over the years. To live a life with intention and consistently invest in the people you love without question is beyond remarkable! Cowboy hats off to you PL! ❤️ Well Done! B*

Brenda - July 03, 2025 at 03:52 PM

JF

“ We would like to send our sincere condolences to the whole Senger family at the loss of their beloved "PL"! We can almost hear the silence felt at the loss of his cheerful call to FUN!!! The whole Huberty family will remember fondly the times on the snake river fishing, (telling stories), picking strawberries, sledding and inner tubing, skiing, or sharing in some of Phil's culinary treats! Nothing in Pullman, or at WSU will ever be the same without that strong, brilliant, energetic if "noisy" presence! There was no one like him. We miss you all, and the world will feel his loss. Our love and prayers to you all, from the John and Mary Huberty family.

John and Mary Huberty, family friends - June 29, 2025 at 10:31 PM

CB

“ I roomed with Phil as a grad student at Va. Tech. He had not shown his culinary talents at that time, we ate a lot of crock pot dishes and bologna sandwiches. Always enjoyed his positive attitude. Tried mountain climbing with him, but my heart was to faint to keep up. Enjoyed numerous fishing trips to Smith Mt. Lake in VA. Didn't catch many fish, but had a lot of fun around the campfires. He was a great friend!!! Carl Brown

Carl Brown - June 29, 2025 at 12:36 PM

BM

“ Becky McFadden planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Phillip Leroy Senger.

Becky McFadden - June 28, 2025 at 09:23 PM

BM

“ *Becky McFadden purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Phillip Leroy Senger.*



Becky McFadden - June 28, 2025 at 09:23 PM

LF

“ *I was a colleague of Phil's and from time to time and had some social interaction with him. Phil had impact and was reliable and added so much to our program at WSU. I can remember one dinner together after a dairy meeting in Everett with Phil, Joe Hillers, Ron Kincaid, and John McNamara. I am not sure I can remember an evening where I laughed so much and so hard. Phil could light up a room*

I was always impressed by his talents, creativity, his can-do attitude, his passion and his great up-front nature. He was a larger-than-life character and will be missed. Please accept my condolences and best wishes. Larry Fox

Larry Fox - June 28, 2025 at 08:16 PM



“ 5 files added to the album Memories Album



Niswonger Reynolds Funeral Home & Greenwood Cemetery - June 27, 2025 at 04:13 PM