

Philippe II de Gaspé Beaubien

1928 – 2025

Philippe II de Gaspé Beaubien passed away peacefully at his home in the Laurentians, on April 9, 2025, at the age of 97 after a full life dedicated to family, friends, community, meaningful work, and a deep spirituality. A proud Quebecer and devoted Canadian, he belonged to that generation of people driven by a deep commitment based on integrity, loyalty, faithfulness and a desire to leave the world a better place for those who come after them. With his beloved wife Nan-b, he raised a family of three children, Philippe III, Nanon and François, and six grandchildren: Aidan, Tatianna, Philippe IV, Louis-Alexandre, Estelle and Arielle.

He began his career working for his father in the family business. However, soon after graduating from Harvard Business School, he went to work with a management consulting firm before founding his own company, Beaubien Distribution. which in five years became the largest truck to store company in Canada. He subsequently sold the company to General Foods and began searching for his next venture.

In 1964, everything was put on hold when he was offered the position of Director of Operations for the World's Fair to be held in Montreal (Expo 1967), a project "destined to fail." He worked night and day to help build a city that would welcome three hundred thousand to five hundred thousand visitors a day. In April 1967, he inaugurated the largest and most successful World's Fair of all time, which welcomed more than 50 million visitors. He received international recognition as the "Mayor of Expo 67," et he became one of the first recipients of the newly instituted Order of Canada.

In 1968, he became a shareholder and the President of Telemedia, a conglomerate of radio and TV stations. In 1970, he took control of the floundering company and within five years managed to turn it around and lay the foundations of what would become a media company active in printing, radio and television broadcasting, satellite communications and eventually mobile telephony. His success led to his being named Chairman of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters in 1973 and 1974. Then, in 1982, he was named Broadcaster of the Year for his "outstanding contributions to Broadcast Education in Canada."

In 1971, after a request from the Prime Minister of Canada, he agreed to become Chair of the Canadian Council on Fitness and Sports. Dedicated research on the poor fitness of Canadians led to his founding and then chairing ParticipACTION, a Canada-wide social marketing program to promote physical activity to improve the fitness and health of all citizens.

Philippe received many honours and accolades throughout his life, including honorary doctorates from York University, the Université de Montréal, and UBC. He was a recipient of the Gold Medal of Czechoslovakia and the Confederation Centennial Medal. He was inducted into the Canadian Broadcast Hall of Fame and the Canadian Business Hall of Fame.

In 1990, he and his wife Nan-b started the de Gaspé Beaubien Foundation. Their first project was the founding of the Institute for Family Enterprise (later renamed Business Families Foundation), a non-profit international organization whose mission is to ensure the future of families and their businesses.

Together, they developed family business centres across Canada, and then globally, as the demand grew for their exceptional teaching programs aimed at families and the professionals who serve them. Their unique contribution was putting family front and centre in the understanding of family business.

Their foundation also worked diligently in the health field, bringing proven managerial concepts to the resolution of a debt-ridden hospital in the Laurentians. Their contribution was recognized through numerous awards over the seven years of their commitment.

In 2012, Nan-b and Philippe's grandchildren asked their grandparents if they could oversee a project in the Foundation. After much discussion and the consideration of several options, the grandchildren embarked on their very own project: the preservation and conservation of fresh water in North America.

Today, their vision has become AquaAction, a pioneering community organization with a profound environmental and economic impact. AquaAction is not only tackling water scarcity and pollution, but it is also revitalizing lives, communities, and industries. By mobilizing young people, innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship, the organization has set a new standard for water preservation and continues to empower a new generation of sustainable entrepreneurs dedicated to clean water and a brighter future.

Though Philippe is no longer with us, his legacy endures, and his passion lives on in AquaAction's mission and in the lives it continues to transform.

We remember Philippe for his lifelong commitments:

- A 70-year commitment to his beloved wife Nan-b in a marriage "Made in heaven."
- A commitment to his family, to the community, to the family's 400-year history in Canada,
- to its legacy and impact on the lives of all those who follow him.

We have lost someone very special.

May flights of angels guide him to a deserved rest.

For more information, visit the de Gaspé Beaubien Foundation's website:
www.fondationdegaspebeaubien.org/en/tributes/