

Dr. Morris Hal Griffin, 79, of Durham, NC passed away at home on March 1, 2022, after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer. Morris was born in Greenville, SC on September 22, 1942, to loving parents, Arthur Gwynn Griffin and Christa Lou Wilson Griffin. He lived there for 2 years prior to moving to Decatur, GA when his father left Furman University as the Assistant Athletic Director and started a new role with the War Labor Board during World War II. In 1946, Morris moved to Davidson, NC, when his father accepted a professor position at Davidson College.

As a child, Morris loved music and started to play instruments (flute and piano) in fourth grade as well as being active in the summer swim league. His interest in sports and music continued through high school. Morris played right guard for his high school football team (#70) and played flute with the marching band during halftime. He graduated from North Mecklenburg High School in 1960.

Morris was a Morehead Scholar and completed his Bachelor of Science in chemistry at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1964. He was an avid sports fan and a lifelong Tarheel. He picked up a new sport, lacrosse, during his freshman year. Morris was a member of UNC's Club Lacrosse Team and co-captain of UNC's first Varsity Lacrosse Team during his senior year. Morris also joined Phi Kappa Sigma and enjoyed many friendships created while a member of the fraternity.

Following college, Morris received his Doctor of Dental Surgery from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1968. He was the Grand Master of Psi Omega Dental Fraternity. Upon graduation, he opened his private dental practice in Durham, NC, where he served his patients for 46 years. Morris is a past president of the Durham Orange County Dental Society, past president of the NC Dental Society and recipient of the 2021 Distinguish Service Scroll for his leadership and outstanding service to the profession of dentistry. He also received the John C Brauer Award from the UNC Dental Alumni Association for distinguished service to the dental profession. He was a founding member of the Guy Willis and Paul Revere Study Clubs and a lifetime member of the American Dental Association, which honored him for outstanding service on the Council on

Access, Prevention, and Interprofessional Relations. He was also past president of the NC Academy of Dentistry and member of the American College of Dentists, International College of Dentists, and Academy of Dentistry International.

Morris was a veteran who served in the NC Army National Guard for 28 years, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Colonel before retirement. He was a lifelong member of the Military Officers Association of America. In 1969, Morris helped to launch a combat-ready mobile dental unit.

Morris' desire to make a difference in his community also led him to join and hold leadership positions in several organizations, including past campaign chair of the United Way and board member of the Greater Durham County Chamber of Commerce. He was a founding board member of the dental component of Medical Security Insurance Company and later served on the board of directors for the Eastern Dentists Insurance Company.

After closing his practice in 2014, he fueled his passion for history and learning by traveling the world, including trips to Russia, China, Turkey, Greece, Europe, and South America. Morris enjoyed collecting wine, trying new cuisines, and finding antiques that embraced the artistry, culture, and history of the people and regions where they were made.

Morris will be most remembered for his commitment and unconditional love for his family. He was a man of great faith, a true servant leader, and dedicated to mentoring and supporting those around him.

Morris is survived by his wife of 17 years, Kathryn 'Kathy' Phillips Griffin, and his 2 daughters, Heather Griffin (Bob Gourley) and Shannon Griffin-Blake (Todd Blake) and 2 stepchildren, Deb Anderson and Chris Claypoole (Michelle); grandchildren, Rob, Alex and Margaret Gourley, Austin and Andie Blake, Jared Anderson (Allie), Caitlin Wills (Portman), Luke Anderson (Alicia), Camryn Green (Carson), Allyssa Althaus, Vasili, Chloe, Brooklyn and Genevieve Claypoole as well as 10 great grandchildren. Morris is predeceased by his first wife of 37 years, Frances 'Blackie' Chambers Griffin.