



David L. Minch

January 19, 1945 - February 7, 2026

David Lynn Minch (1945-2026)

The Inaugural (and only) Head Curator of the "Aardvark Museum of American History" and beloved teacher and coach to hundreds of students, David Minch, passed into God's embrace February 7, 2026, at Corewell Hospital in Troy, Michigan, after a prolonged illness. He was 81.

David was born in Ellwood, Indiana, to Helen D. Minch (née Wells) and Everett F. Minch before moving to Williamston, Michigan, where he spent his childhood. He later attended Lansing Community College and transferred to Albion College where he earned his teaching certificate with a major in History and a Minor in English. He would later go on to earn a master's degree in School Counseling at Eastern Michigan University. In class at Albion he met the love of his life, Susan Galbraith and they were united in marriage in 1967, in Flint. They were married 58 years at the time of David's passing.

For 38 years David taught junior high history, geography, English, and journalism, first at Mary Lyon Jr. High, and later at Churchill Jr. High and Helen Keller Jr. High, all in the Royal Oak Community Schools. While he excelled in all of the subjects he taught, his students loved his methods of illuminating social studies - particularly history. Because Mary Lyon was such an old building his administrators permitted him to paint murals on his classroom

walls (pictured above), giving birth to the "Aardvark Museum of American History." Parodying images from Mad Magazine he depicted figures and scenes from American and world history. When demolition crews eventually came to tear down the building to make way for a McDonalds, workers would come to the shell of his classroom to eat their lunch and enjoy the paintings. His love of aardvarks was sparked by the trivia that "aardvark" was typically the first full word to appear in the English dictionary at that time. These creatures also played a central role in his artwork. At the end of each semester, David wrote and performed lengthy stories about each of his classes that used the names of his students as puns. He always incorporated every single student in class - a monumental feat of writing. At Churchill he would also take up coaching girls basketball and softball, taking his teams to numerous district championships. Countless students would later tell him and his family how pivotal David's classes or coaching was in their lives, often referencing some of his most challenging assignments - such as tests to fill in country names and capitals in blank maps of the continents, challenging current events quizzes, and mock trials of the Dred Scott case. His children have vivid memories of him sitting in his Lay-z-Boy recliner each night with a red Bic marker and diligently marking-up papers until late at night. He cared deeply about his students with more than one student later remarking that his actions and support saved their lives.

David and Susan raised two children who reflected their values of teaching and service. His daughter, Marcia Franks (Royal Oak, MI) became an Occupational Therapist bringing care and support to numerous patients in two different Detroit-area health systems. Dr. Kevin Minch (Kirksville, MO) became a professor of communication and a speech and debate coach at Truman State University where he now serves as Associate Provost. They both learned, and still practice, the value of service exemplified by their parents' example.

David's teaching career was cut abruptly short when a routine knee replacement revealed an underlying auto-immune condition that was attacking his liver. He underwent a liver transplant in November 2005 and continued to benefit from his donor's gift until his death - a remarkable 20 years. While he experienced many setbacks and triumphs in his post-transplant journey, his transplant allowed David to enjoy the childhoods of his grandchildren Kyle and Neil Franks who adored their Papa. David was active in the United Methodist Churches of Royal Oak - first at St. John's UMC and later at First UMC, where he was an enthusiastic member of the ROMEOS ("Retired Old Men Eating Out"). David and Susan were active volunteers for the Henry Ford Hospital Transplant Community and Gift of Life Michigan. He persevered through his health challenges with a strong will to live, an infectious sense of humor, and the tireless care and support of Susan. With his children as collaborators, David started to wear graphic t-shirts with sarcastic sayings that alternately entertained and frightened his doctors and nurses, including one poor nurse who became apoplectic over a shirt with the abdomen covered in fake blood spatters that read "I'm fine" across the chest. Even in his most uncomfortable and awkward moments in nursing care he would crack jokes or self-deprecate to make those around him more at ease. In these moments he often cared as much about how others were feeling as he was feeling.

While he was not a soldier, David came from a long family line of military service which, coupled with his fascination with historical conflicts, led to a lifelong hobby collecting artifacts of military history - particularly uniform insignia. In his later years as a teacher, this interest shifted to artifacts from the US and Soviet space programs. He maintained an active correspondence with former astronauts and cosmonauts which included contacts with the likes of John Glenn and Jim Lovell and their staff. He used his collections in his classrooms to inject a sense of realism into lessons about war and the space race. Years after his transplant, he was able to travel with Susan and their son

to visit Washington, DC, to see important historical sites and visit the Space Shuttle Enterprise at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum.

David is survived by his wife, Susan Minch of Royal Oak, MI, daughter Marcia Franks (Royal Oak), son Kevin Minch (Kirksville, MO), grandchildren Kyle Franks and Neil Franks (Royal Oak), brother Fred Minch (St. Clair Shores, MI) and three nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents Helen D. Minch and Everett F. Minch; his mother-in-law, Phyllis Galbraith; his nephew Spencer Minch and; and his son-in-law, Christopher Franks.

No funeral service is planned. A private memorial will be scheduled at a later date at the gravesite. David will be interred at the Washtenog Memorial Park in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The family asks that, in lieu of flowers, or as a memorial in David's memory, people consider donating to Gift of Life Michigan <<https://giftoflifemichigan.org/>> to support organ transplantation work.

Tribute Wall

ET

“*Mr. Minch was my seventh grade geography teacher at Churchill Jr. High. He was kind, brilliant, funny, patient, and one of the best educators I ever had the gift of learning from. In the nearly thirty years since I have seen him, I still think of him every time I see or think of an aardvark or look at a map of the United States (he would give us blank copies and we had to fill in each state's name and the capitol city. When we got 100% he rewarded us with a full sized candy bar. We had a kid in class that would doze off sometimes and Mr Minch had a squeaky rubber hammer that he would use to awaken the napper 😂 I am sorry to hear of his passing and I am sorry I didn't get the chance to reconnect with him in adulthood. He taught my father and Uncle and Aunts at Mary Lyon before me, as well. Memory Eternal Mr. Minch, thank you for the knowledge you imparted and the impact you left on me. Erica Sebolka Churchill Jr High 1996-1998*

Erica Trombley - February 14 at 09:59 AM

AM

“ *Mr. Minch was my middle school teacher and basketball and softball coach 34 years ago. He was an incredible educator and I still remember his lessons and stories about aardvarks all these years later.*

My favorite memories were at the end of the sports season when he would read aloud the story he wrote about the team, incorporating every players last name as a pun. It was the highlight of the season and always hilarious.

I learned of his passing through a fellow classmate and friend. A group of us from jr.high are all still friends and keep in touch. In the text thread discussing his passing every single friend had a story about how much they loved his class, a funny memory, how he inspired them to love history, or how playing sports for him was the best part of jr.high. A few of us (including myself and my husband) are educators ourselves and have a special appreciation for the impact he left on his students.

Sending my condolences to his family and all who loved him. Rest easy Mr.Minch.

- Andrea (Goldsworthy) Murphy

andrea murphy - February 12 at 10:20 AM

DB

“ *8th grade English class at Mary Lyons. I have never not used a comma at the closing of a letter after love, sincerely, respectfully yours and so on. Thank you Dave Minch even after 58 years.*

Doreen Thompson Brunner - February 10 at 08:57 PM

JS

“ *Mr. Minch was the greatest teacher I ever had. I still remember him thinking me and Adam Brown were hellions because he watched us get into all kinds of trouble on Jeffery Avenue with that leading to us being kept in seperate periods for his class in 7th Grade. My love and prayers go out to the Minch family. Mr. Minch was one of the greatest men I have ever known.*

Jon Smith - February 09 at 09:49 PM

SC

“ *The man who sparked a lifelong love of history for me. I'm lucky to have had classes in the Aardvark Museum at Lyons. An absolute legend of an educator. Rest easy, Mr. Minch.*

Steven C - February 09 at 09:15 PM

LK

“ *Uncle Dave knew how to treat people. He always made me laugh.*

Loraine Klonowski - February 09 at 08:04 PM