

## Duff Gillespie Obituary

October 20, 1942 - October 4, 2025



Duff G. Gillespie, a renowned global health leader, respected scholar, and devoted husband, father, grandfather, and brother, passed away at 82 on October 4.

Born in Cairo, Illinois, Duff studied at Washington University in St. Louis, earning a B.A. in Political Science and both an M.A. and Ph.D. in Sociology. He later lived in Kensington, Maryland, with his family.

Duff Gillespie's stellar career in global health spanned more than 60 years. He joined USAID in 1973 as a health administrator before taking on leadership positions, including chief of the Research Division and director in the Office of Population. He also oversaw the creation of the Global Health Bureau and served as its senior deputy assistant administrator, the senior-most career position in the agency's health sector. After leaving USAID, he was a Visiting Scholar at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. From 2004 until his passing, he was a Senior Scholar at the Bill

and Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health and Professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

During his three decades at USAID, he laid the foundation for some of the most significant advances in international population and health policy. His leadership was instrumental in shaping U.S. global health strategies and advancing evidence-based programs worldwide. He worked closely with leadership in the United Nations Population Fund, World Health Organization, UNAIDS, European government and non-governmental donor agencies, private foundations and health ministries around the world. He was the recipient of many honors and awards, including USAID Administrator's Distinguished Career Service Award, the Presidential Rank Award (three times) and the Arthur Flemming Award. He continued to actively develop international projects in global reproductive health while at Johns Hopkins.

His global health policy efforts have established and protected many initiatives that improved public health and nutrition, human development and human rights in low-income countries. Duff was a rigorous thinker, data-driven researcher, generous mentor, and strategic advocate.

Outside of his professional life, Duff was known for his sharp sense of humor, wide-ranging curiosity, and commitment to his family. Duff enjoyed fine dining and was an excellent cook, especially curry and barbecue. He loved British mysteries, high-performance cars, hiking, working out, and, when younger, playing squash.

Duff is survived by his wife, Joanne; his sister, Linda (Carolyn); his sons, Reed and Mark (Jenny); and his grandchildren, who will carry forward his love, guidance and example.

**Please share a memory of Duff Gillespie to include in a keepsake book for family and friends.**

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