

**Donald C. Danielson**

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Dec. 3, 1919 - May 7, 2015. Donald C. Danielson, Indiana philanthropist and business leader, died Thursday at his home in New Castle after a brief illness. He was 95.

"Danny" Danielson served as vice chairman of City Securities, the oldest and largest Indiana-based investment bank, commuting regularly to his office in Indianapolis until the months preceding his death. He was former president of Modernfold and led the expansion of a new industry, as the accordion-fold Modernfold Door transformed the way businesses, schools and churches utilized interior space.

He was the longest-serving trustee on record at his alma mater, Indiana University, sitting on the board from 1958 to 1980 and serving as president for 11 of those years. He spurred the creation of IU's Wells Scholar program.

As a philanthropist, he led fundraising campaigns in his hometown and across the state that consistently exceeded their targeted goal. He served as vice chair and then as co-chair of two IU campaigns that raised a collective \$800 million for the university.

For his excellence in business and service to his state, Danielson in 2009 received the Sachem award, the highest honor in the state of Indiana. Multiple times he was named a Sagamore of the Wabash by an Indiana governor, and, in 2014, the Indiana Historical Society named him a Living Legend. He was inducted into the Junior Achievement of Central Indiana Business Hall of Fame in 2010.

Danielson spent his childhood in Minnesota and South Dakota before becoming the first person in his family to attend college, coming to IU on a baseball scholarship.

He graduated in 1942 with a bachelor's degree in education before entering in the [U.S. Navy](#). He served in both the Pacific and Atlantic theaters of [World War II](#) until 1946, when he was honorably discharged with the rank of lieutenant, senior grade.

Upon graduation, Danielson had been signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers. When the war ended, the Dodgers once again invited Danielson to report to training camp with their AAA team - coincidentally, the same year Jackie Robinson joined the Dodgers' AAA team, at the same position as Danielson.

But head won out over heart, as Danielson, a consummate storyteller, would say. He decided instead to return to IU for a job at the Alumni Association. While there, he served a one-year stint as interim head baseball coach.

In Indiana, he met Patricia Peterson, daughter of City Securities founder J. Dwight Peterson, whom Danielson knew through their mutual involvement in the Sigma Chi fraternity. Danny and Patty Danielson were married April 12, 1947. Patty Danielson preceded him in death in 2013.

Danielson joined the future Modernfold in 1948 as a dapper salesman, working his way up to a director on the board in 1958. He was elected president in 1969. Under Danielson's leadership, Modernfold became a division of American Standard.

But the job involved constant travel. When the Danielsons' third daughter left home to go to college, he changed careers to spend more time with his wife. He joined Indianapolis-based City Securities in 1976 and was elected vice chairman of the investment bank's board in 1981.

Danielson and his wife focused much of their philanthropy on giving back to their hometown of New Castle. After kick-starting giving toward an IU East satellite facility in New Castle, Danielson and his wife jointly received the Chancellor's Medallion for their service to the IU campus. The new branch, which opened in 1999, was named the Danielson Center in their honor.

The couple also led the effort to relocate the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame to New Castle in 1990 and spearheaded

the development of the new Henry County YMCA in 2003.

For his involvement in his community, Danielson was twice named Citizen of the Year by the New Castle Chamber of Commerce, and in 2012, he and his wife jointly received the Henry County Foundation's Judy Melton Award for their commitment to their community.

Danielson also served as chairman of the Walther Cancer Foundation, sat on the board of governors for the Riley Children's Foundation, chaired the Fellowship of Christian Athletes' national board and served as a director of New Castle's Ameriana Bancorp.

In 1988, he received a Jefferson Award for public service through The Indianapolis Star. The Indianapolis Business Journal named him a 2004 Healthcare Hero. In 2007, the [Rotary Club](#) of Indianapolis named him Rotarian of the Year.

Danielson embodied true friendship. On holidays, his voice would boom out of his office as he called close friends to wish them well. He'd network and dish out advice in a packed schedule of breakfasts in New Castle, lunches in downtown Indianapolis and golf outings with friends and business partners.

A proud Republican, Danielson aided with the campaigns of Vice President Dan Quayle, Sen. Dan Coats and Gov. Mike Pence and was appointed by President George H.W. Bush to the Credit Standards Advisory Committee. In 2013, the Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site gave him its Advancing American Democracy award.

Danielson's involvement at Indiana University also continued throughout his life. Along with his trustee's position, he was a director of the IU Foundation and a member of the IU East board of advisors. The university honored him in 1994 with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. He also received an IU Distinguished Alumni Service award, a Thomas Hart Benton Medal, a President's Medal of Excellence, a Zora G. Clevenger Award for athletic contributions and the 2007 Herman B. Wells Visionary Award.

Three daughters followed Danielson to IU and, along with their husbands, carry on his legacy of giving and faith: Mary Johnson (Stan) of Quincy, Mass.; Susie Anderson (Duane) of Indianapolis; and Amy Thompson (Ron) of Kokomo, Ind.

Eight grandchildren also survive, along with their spouses. They're teaching 13 great-grandchildren to share their Go-Pa's love of sports, especially IU athletics.

Besides his wife, Danielson was preceded in death by his parents, Benjamin and Freda Holdhusen Danielson; his brother, John (Patty); and his sister, Leanore von Grossman (Fritz).

The family will receive callers from 2 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, at Sproles Family Funeral Home, 2400 S. Memorial Drive, New Castle. ([www.sprolesfamilycares.com](http://www.sprolesfamilycares.com))

A funeral service will be held at 2 p.m. Friday, May 15, at First Presbyterian Church, 1202 Church St., New Castle, where Danielson was an elder. Burial will follow in South Mound Cemetery, with military honors provided by contingents from the US Navy, American Legion and [VFW](#).

Donations in his memory may be offered to the Indiana University Foundation, P.O. Box 6460, Indianapolis, IN 46206-6460; or the Henry County Community Foundation, P.O. Box 6006, New Castle, IN 47362.

## **Funeral Home**

### **Sproles Family Funeral Home - New Castle**

2400 South Memorial Drive New Castle, IN 47362  
(765) 521-2400

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