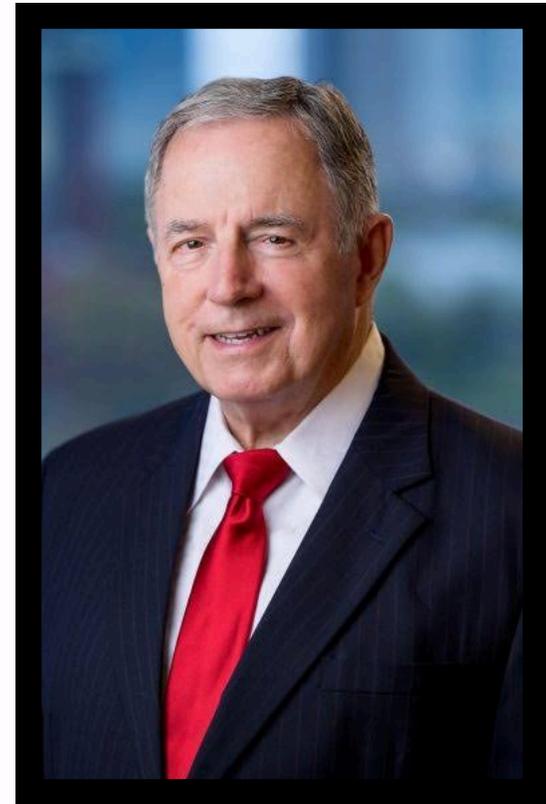


Memorials may be made to Arkansas Children's Hospital, Lakewood United Methodist Church, Hilburn Scholarship foundation for Walnut Ridge high school seniors, or The Razorback Foundation for the Diane Palmer Hilburn Scholarship fund.



Celebrating THE LIFE OF



Sam Hilburn

July 19, 1942 - January 12, 2026

Sam Hilburn of North Little Rock was born on July 19, 1942, to Harry and Mildred Hilburn in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. He passed away on Monday, January 12, following a tragic fall that resulted in a brain injury.

Sam treasured his childhood in Walnut Ridge, where he developed the fighting spirit, generosity, and deep loyalty that defined his life. He held himself to high standards, excelling academically and athletically, which earned him a football scholarship to the University of Arkansas and sparked a lifelong love for the Razorbacks. He received his bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1964.

During his undergraduate years, Sam was a member of Sigma Chi Fraternity, where he formed lifelong friendships and demonstrated early leadership. He was elected Student Body President in 1964.

Sam earned his Juris Doctor from the University Of Arkansas School Of Law at Little Rock in 1970. While in law school, he was a charter member and president of the Phi Alpha Delta Fraternity, Joe T. Robinson Chapter, reflecting his early dedication to the legal profession.

Following law school, Sam helped establish what is now Hilburn and Harper, Ltd., where he served as senior partner from 1971 until his passing. He also served as City Attorney for North Little Rock from 1971 to 1974. His public service continued when he was appointed Municipal Judge of the North Little Rock Municipal Court, serving from August to October 1998.

In October 2006, Governor Huckabee appointed Sam to the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas, where he contributed his experience and leadership in support of higher education across the state.

Sam's commitment to service extended well beyond the courtroom. In 1988 he represented the city of North Little Rock for the development and construction of the Murray Hydroelectric Power Plant on the Arkansas River. In 2005, he was recognized by the Pulaski County Bar Association as Attorney of the Year.

His extensive community involvement included serving as past chairman of the board for Pulaski County Day Services for the Handicapped, North Hills School for Exceptional Children, and the North Little Rock Speech and Hearing Clinic. He also served on the boards of the Arkansas Repertory Theatre and CARTI, supporting both the arts and healthcare in Arkansas.

A man of strong faith, Sam taught Sunday school at Lakewood United Methodist Church for college-aged and young adult classes and, later in life, occasionally taught alongside his wife Diane in their beloved class.

Professionally, Sam was an active member of the Pulaski County Bar Association, the Arkansas Bar Association, and the American Bar Association. Throughout his distinguished legal career, he was widely respected for his leadership, professionalism, and dedication to his clients and community.

Sam's life was marked by unwavering devotion to his family, his profession, and his community. His legacy lives on through his contributions to the law, education, and the many organizations he served with distinction.

He was preceded in death by the love of his life, his wife of 57 years, Diane Palmer Hilburn; his parents; and his brothers, Dick and Tom Hilburn. He is survived by his children Heather (Patrick) McHaney, Amber (Matt) Enderlin, Paige (Brian) Bratcher, and Scott Hilburn (Laura); thirteen grandchildren, Sam, Heath, and Jack McHaney; Allison Enderlin; Cole Enderlin (McKenzie); Drake Enderlin (Allie); Nick Enderlin; Luke, Braden, and Olivia Bratcher; Annaleigh, Aniston, and Norreh Hilburn; and four great-grandchildren, Whit and Palmer Enderlin and Collins and Gray Enderlin. He is also survived by his sister, Alice Stovall.

A celebration of Sam's life will be held Saturday, January 17, at 11:00 a.m. at Lakewood United Methodist Church in North Little Rock, with a reception to follow.