



## Robert John Berghel

April 26, 1934 - November 14, 2019

Robert John Berghel, age 85, died November 14, 2019, in Sarasota, FL. He was born April 26, 1934, in New York City, to Oscar Harold Berghel and Edna Muller Berghel. He was baptized on January 20, 1935, by The Rev. Benjamin Moltram at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, College Point, NY, and confirmed on Palm Sunday, March 30, 1947, by The Rev. Walter Traub at Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church in Omaha, Nebraska.

After attending Omaha North High School, Bob graduated in 1956 from the University of Nebraska College of Business Administration with a Bachelor of Science degree, double majoring in Business Administration and Economics. He was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity. He met his wife, Mary Louise Pittack, at the University and they were married at the University Lutheran Chapel on February 21, 1957. After his discharge from the Air Force in 1958, he earned his Bachelor of Laws degree magna cum laude from Washington and Lee University School of Law, where he received the Labor Law Award, was a member of Phi Delta Phi legal honor society, and was associate editor of the Law Review.

Bob devoted his entire 50-year legal career to Fisher & Phillips, the Atlanta-based labor and employment law firm he loved. Joining the firm directly from Washington & Lee in 1961, he became a partner in 1963. In 1970, he designed the firm's first administrative structure, one that remained in place for

more than three decades. Serving continuously on the Administrative Committee from that time forward, Bob was handpicked by the founders to succeed them as Chairman and Managing Partner in 1988 and thereafter elected by his partners, serving from 1989 until 1996. Bob led the firm's first moves toward national expansion, opening offices in Fort Lauderdale, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New Orleans. During his time as Chairman, the firm grew from 60 to over 100 attorneys. As a practicing lawyer, Bob was a respected expert in airline labor law with a roster of national and regional airline clients. In recognition of this, he was appointed Management Chairman of the Railway Labor Act subcommittee of the Labor Section of the American Bar Association. According to the Firm's present Chairman and Managing Partner, Roger Quillen, "As a partner of the firm, Bob was respected by his peers as a man of integrity, patience, business acumen and good judgment. Those who knew him longest and most intimately also loved him as a man who put others before himself, starting with his devotion to family and extending to the firm and its clients."

Bob founded the University of Nebraska Alumni Association in Atlanta, Georgia, and served on the Alumni Association Board of Directors as Regional Director. An avid Cornhusker fan, he hosted many alumni football events at his home. In Atlanta, he served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Lutheran Church of the Ascension and Vice-Chairman of Lutheran Church of the Resurrection. He served for nine years as Elder at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Gainesville, GA.

In 1995, Bob and his wife, Mary Lou, moved to Clarkesville, GA, where they restored Acoa, a plantation plain house built in 1834. The house and gardens have been host to many events for area garden clubs, Republican fundraisers, and church events.

Bob is survived by his beloved wife of 62 years, Mary Louise Pittack Berghel,

his sons, Robert John Berghel, Jr, of Chattanooga, TN and William Wesley Berghel of Memphis, TN, daughters Mary Lucinda vonWaldner of Sarasota, FL and Susan Jane Sukstorf of Olathe, KS, and his brother, Harold Leslie Berghel of Boulder City, NV. He is also survived by 10 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

A Celebration of Life is scheduled for Monday, January 6, 2020, at 11:00 a.m. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 600 South Enota Dr, Gainesville, GA. A visitation is scheduled for Wednesday, November 27 at 10:00 at Toale Brothers Funeral Home, 40 N. Orange Ave, Sarasota, FL, followed by a gravesite interment service to be held at the Sarasota National Cemetery at 1:30 pm.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the American Kidney Fund at [kidneyfund.org](http://kidneyfund.org).