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## Veteran Presidential Adviser David Gergen Passes Away at 83

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David Gergen, the trusted adviser who quietly shaped the course of four American presidencies, has died at 83, leaving behind a legacy defined by integrity, bipartisanship, and public service.

Gergen passed away after a long illness, as confirmed by colleagues at Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), where he spent the latter part of his career mentoring future leaders.

For decades, Gergen became one of Washington's most respected behind-the-scenes figures. He began his political journey as a speechwriting assistant under President Richard

Nixon in 1971, later serving in key communications roles for Presidents Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan.

Despite the changing political tides, Gergen remained a steady and principled presence in the White House. His final government stint came as a counselor to President Bill Clinton, highlighting his rare ability to work across the aisle at the highest levels of power.

Born in North Carolina, David Richmond Gergen graduated from Yale University before attending Harvard Law School (HLS). He served in the United States Navy (US Navy) during the 1960s, an experience that instilled a lifelong dedication to public duty. Over the course of his career, he was awarded 27 honorary degrees, a testament to his impact across government, education, and civic life.

After leaving government, Gergen founded the Center for Public Leadership (CPL) at HKS in 1998. He remained involved there until his passing, holding the title of professor of public service emeritus.

Jeremy Weinstein, dean of HKS, acknowledged Gergen's deep commitment to nurturing ethical leadership. Hannah Riley Bowles, former co-director of CPL, added that Gergen "devoted decades of his life to serving those who sought to serve" and remembered him as a leader with "unmatched character, integrity, and kindness."

## Enduring Influence

In addition to his White House and academic roles, Gergen became a familiar voice in American homes through his work as a senior political analyst at CNN. He was known for his commentary and his commitment to civil discourse. In his 2022 book, *Hearts Touched with Fire: How Great Leaders Are Made*, he wrote, "Our greatest leaders have emerged from both good times and, more often, challenging ones... The very finest among them make the difficult calls that can ultimately alter the course of history."

Following the news of his death, tributes from across the political spectrum poured in. While Gergen worked for administrations of both parties, he remained committed to a vision of service that transcended politics.

A private burial is scheduled for Monday at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, according to Mark Douglass of Douglass

Funeral Home. A larger memorial service will be held at Harvard in the coming weeks.