



David Fantle

November 25, 1959 - April 21, 2026

David Fantle,

Age 66, of Milwaukee, WI, an accomplished author, affable college professor and beloved family man, died suddenly of a cardiovascular emergency on April 21, 2026.

Born and raised in the Highland Park neighborhood of St. Paul, MN, David graduated from the University of Minnesota but soon after made Wisconsin his home. He held senior positions at Wisconsin Gas, VISIT Milwaukee and United Performing Arts Fund. David also proudly served as Deputy Secretary at the Wisconsin Department of Tourism.

David is survived by his loving wife and exercise partner of 40 years, Cathy (nee Lang), and was a cherished father to Grace Kaplan (Jonah), Madeline (Benjamin Kaplan) and Max (Allie). He was known and celebrated as "Pops" to his prized grandchildren, Rena, Romi, Lang and Hannah; he will be missed as well by his mother, Betty, and older brother, Phillip (Susan) and loving nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his father, Herbert Fantle, a Holocaust survivor.

Beyond his family, David also had one other love: Hollywood. Often collaborating with his best friend, Tom Johnson, David interviewed nearly 250

celebrities over 45 years and never missed a reference, quote, song or dance that harkened back to the legends of the silver screen. He enjoyed sharing that love with audiences around the world, especially his students at Marquette University.

The family will hold a funeral at 2:00 p.m. Thursday, April 23, 2026 at Congregation Sinai, 8223 North Port Washington Road, Milwaukee, WI, followed by interment at Greenwood Cemetery, 2615 W. Cleveland Ave., Milwaukee, WI.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made in David's honor to the Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center (HERC) <<https://holocaustcentermilwaukee.org/donate/>> or the College of Communication at Marquette University. <<https://www.givecampus.com/campaigns/28093/donations/new?a=10252658>>

To join virtually (hosted by Congregation Sinai), <https://Sinaimke.livecontrol.tv/2df2ca70>

Shiva to be announced at the service.

Cemetery Details

Greenwood Cemetery

2615 W. Cleveland Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53215-2901

Previous Events

Service

APR **23**. 2:00 PM (CT)

Congregation Sinai
8223 N. Port Washington Rd.
Fox Point, WI 53217

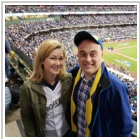
Tribute Wall

JG

“ *David was a wonderful man. Our deepest condolences to Cathy and the entire family.*

Josh and Julia Gimbel

Joshua Gimbel - April 22 at 04:20 PM



“ *Dave was a friend and co-worker of my partner, Laura.*

Because Dave cared about fellow employees he learned she lived with a guy who was also interested in the stars of yesteryear.

When Don Rickles played a show in Milwaukee and Dave found out, through Laura, I was a big fan he took me to the show and I got to meet Rickles!

You'd have thought it would be weird to meet Laura's coworker to eagerly meet one of my heroes. But it wasn't, we argued about movies and talked about old stars and it was great.

I talk about this encounter with Dave and meeting Rickles all of the time.

And the picture Dave took of me and Rickles (below) is a treasured possession.



Bob Mohr - April 22 at 04:05 PM

MB

“ *My deepest condolences to the Kaplan and Fantle families. May David’s memory be a blessing.*



Mikaela Bush - April 22 at 03:08 PM

KJ

“ *Dave gave me my first shot in PR over a decade ago at UPAF. In the subsequent years, he became more than a boss--he was a mentor and a friend. He truly cared about the people on his team as if they were family, checking in on us, sharing articles and keeping track of our successes. There are no words, other than to hope that he is up there dancing with the Hollywood greats. He will be so so missed.* - Kate Joachim

Kate Joachim - April 22 at 01:58 PM

DT

“ *It is hard to imagine life without Dave’s incredible wit, passion, generosity, humility and, most of all, friendship. He was truly one of a kind in so many distinct ways, especially in how he could easily put a smile on your face. It is a sad time for so many who knew Dave and all he brought to our lives. My deepest sympathies to Cathy, another special individual, and the entire family. Dave was so very proud of all of you. My thoughts and prayers are with you.*
Deanna Tillisch

Deanna Tillisch - April 22 at 01:39 PM

CH

I had the privilege of working with Dave at the Gas Company as well as staying in contact with him over the years. He was an intelligent, personable and gracious person. May peace be with Dave and his family.

Cliff Heise - April 22 at 06:20 PM

SR

I'm heartbroken to hear of David's passing.

We first met when he was an intern in the PR department at Pillsbury—and even then, he set the bar. David was the full package: smart, funny, endlessly curious, and fearless. Not many of us knew a 20-year-old who, with his sidekick, could finagle interviews with Hollywood's elite.

He had this incredible energy that drew people in—we were all a little in awe of his intelligence and completely charmed by his wit. And then there were the things that made him so distinctly David: his love of the stock market (with a proud nod to his dad, Herb), his encyclopedic movie knowledge, and his passion for baseball and professional wrestling. I still laugh thinking about the night he took me to my one and only wrestling match—complete with backstories for every wrestler and, yes, a sheik headdress he tried (unsuccessfully) to get me to wear.

Life took us in different directions over the years, but David was the kind of friend you stayed connected to. I had the joy of watching his relationship with Cathy unfold—and it was clear from the start they were meant for each other. And later, seeing him as a dad—so proud of Grace, Maddy, and Max—was something special. It fit him perfectly.

The last time we connected, he had just been honored by Marquette. I joked, "Weren't you a wide-eyed intern only days ago?" His reply: "Pillsbury, 1982. From internet to Medicare recipient!" That was David—sharp, self-aware, and always with the perfect line.

He was truly one of a kind. I feel incredibly lucky to have known him.

Sending love to Cathy, Grace, Maddy, Max, and all who loved him.

SHELLY REGAN - April 23 at 12:17 PM