



David Shinn, beloved husband, father, and grandfather died with his family at his bedside on February 3rd, 2026, at Stoneleigh Hospice in Lansing, MI. He had spent just one day in hospice after battling a lengthy illness.

David was born on September 29, 1947, in Greensboro, NC, to Gloria Carter Shinn and Conrad Selwyn Shinn. Both of his parents preceded him in death, his father most recently in May 2025 at age 102. David was raised in Eden, North Carolina, where he enjoyed the company of two younger sisters who now survive him. Constance (Connie) Shinn and Diane Shinn and husband Craig Brown are residents of Charlotte, NC.

With their father pursuing a distinguished career as a US Navy pilot, David took on the role of man of the house and was conscientious in helping his legal secretary mother with whatever was needed. At the age of just 15 he entered the work force as a disc jockey at WLOE Radio in Eden. He also was an honor student and member of the marching band (French Horn) at John Motley Morehead High School.

After his 1965 high school graduation, David departed for Michigan State University where he was a member of MSU's newly-formed first residential college, Justin Morrill College. In addition to his language and liberal arts studies, he continued to work in radio as a DJ and later a newsman at Lansing area stations WMSN, WKAR, WVIC, and WJIM.

It was also at MSU where he met fellow JMC student, Mary Ann Linke of Manistee, MI, who would eventually become his partner in life and business. They celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary just a week before his death. In addition to being a wonderful husband, David was a kind and attentive son-in-law to Mary Ann's parents, Wayne and Helen Linke of Manistee, and provided loving attention and care to them to the end of their lives.

After marriage, David's radio career included a stint at WPON Pontiac where he was a newsman and host of a talk show which included sometimes intense discussion of civil rights and race relations. When the radio station decided to let him go, fans of his show picketed! However, soon thereafter, David was hired by the re-election campaign of Democratic Senator Philip Hart and later the campaign of Richard Austin to be Michigan Secretary of State.

After Mr. Austin was elected, David was hired by the Michigan Department of State where, amongst other things, he was responsible for re-writing and re-organizing that little instructional book familiar to all Michigan drivers, "What Every Driver Must Know". He also wrote speeches for and was special assistant to Mr. Austin who was sometimes known as "Mr. Safety".

It was in that capacity that David worked to create awareness of child passenger safety in Michigan and around the country as he interacted with early advocates such as Dr. Robert Sanders of TN and Annemarie Shelness of Physicians for Automotive Safety.

His own personal awareness had been awakened when his son, Erik, was born and was casually placed into the arms of his mother in the front seat of the car upon leaving the hospital. Thus began a long career in that field which continued well beyond his 10 year retirement from the Mi Dept of State.

In 1980 David became the first Director of Public Education for the American Academy of Pediatrics in Evanston, IL, where his work focused on promoting child safety, particularly in the context of car safety seats. It was there that he launched "The First Ride A Safe Ride" initiative to create public awareness and hired Deborah Davis Stewart as the first editor of "Safe Ride News" which continues to this day — now as an independent publication. In the years to follow, his companies, Shinn and Associates and Prevention Alternatives, made him even better known around the country. He created the videotape series, "Getting It Right" to demonstrate correct use of car seats and acted as non-retail manufacturers' rep for car seat companies. He also acted as agent for the Weiner/Seaman Bucklebear series of fun educational materials which encouraged children to be good passengers. David never did retire completely, and most recently his work focused on sales of special needs transportation devices for children.

It should be said that in later years David enjoyed the freedom that our portable communication devices give us in working where we choose! In David's case, that choice often was northwestern Michigan where he loved to photograph Lake Michigan in all of its moods and seasons. A particularly photogenic and engaging grandson was another favorite subject of photos and attention. The photo that accompanies this obituary illustrates the relaxation and enjoyment provided by proximity to water and the coming and going of big ships along the Manistee River and the channel to Lake Michigan. A big laker had just gone around the bend leading to Lake Michigan when this photo was taken.

It is difficult for a family member to properly explain and assess the extensive work that David did in promoting child passenger safety, so we will defer to this kind tribute from a former associate in the field who witnessed that work over the years.

"In my ten year (1983-1993) involvement in child passenger safety at the state and national levels, I knew David as a highly respected and well-known leader, advocate, educator, most articulate speaker and writer, and trainer. I remember David as very passionate and caring in all that he did and said to advance knowledge, policies, legislation, and best practices of child passenger safety.

I consider David one of the early pioneer voices in this country on behalf of keeping all kids safe, including children with special needs, for every ride. David was "there" at every turn and impactful in his words and persistent efforts and presence at state and national meetings, conferences, and trainings. He spoke up with a clear, informed, insightful and powerful voice whenever and wherever he could and people listened with respect to what he had to say.

Look to David and the memory of all that he did and accomplished over his distinguished and productive career as to why children everywhere for generations and in the future are safer for every ride." - Karen Bruner Stroup

Besides his sisters, David is survived by his wife Mary Ann, son Erik David Shinn, grandson Alex Shinn, and daughter-in-law Cindy Maldonado all of Haslett, MI. In Nashville, TN, he is survived by his paternal aunt, Jean Shinn Hart, and her family.

In Georgia, he is survived by cousins Billie Pinckney and Mary Lawson Critz and their families. Across the country he is survived by a network of extended family members and friends who enriched his life.

David was a man of intelligence, patience, grace, courage, and above all kindness. He is loved. He is missed, and in the words of an old WWII song favored by his father . . . "We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when." We're counting on that.

In Lansing the family is being served by Gorsline Runciman Funeral Homes and in Manistee by Herbert Funeral Home.

Mass of Christian Burial will take place on Friday, April 10, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at Guardian Angels Church, 371 Fifth Street, Manistee, MI with Fr. James Bearss as celebrant.

Visitation with the family will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the church prior to the service.

Rite of Committal will take place at Mount Carmel Cemetery, also in Manistee at the corner of Maple Street and Merkey Road, immediately following the Mass.

Memorial donations may be made to The Guardian Angel Historic Preservation Project in Manistee, MI, on which David worked and which was close to his heart. He so much enjoyed greeting and speaking with people at open houses and special programs and publicizing events or just sitting in the parking lot listening to the bells and soaking in the atmosphere surrounding that beautiful old church where he and Mary Ann were married.

See Guardian Angel Historic Preservation Project: [www.osvhub.com/catholic-community-of-manistee/giving/funds/guardian-angel-historic-preservation-project](http://www.osvhub.com/catholic-community-of-manistee/giving/funds/guardian-angel-historic-preservation-project)

Alternatively, in light of David's longtime commitment to the safety and care of children, memorial donations might be directed to Shriners Children's Hospitals at <https://donate.shrinerschildrens.org>