

# ***Announcing the Ascension of***

## ***David Lewis Hess***

August 15, 1943 to March 24, 2026



It is with both sadness and deep gratitude that we share the news of the ascension of David Lewis Hess on March 24, 2026. As he begins his new life in the

eternal spirit world, he remains deeply connected to his beloved wife of 51 years, Juliana Hess, their four children, and twelve grandchildren.

David Hess's Seonghwa and Remembrance Service will take place on **Saturday, April 4, 2026, at 11 AM in the Washington Times Arbor Ballroom** (3600 New York Ave., NE, Washington, DC). This will be followed by a luncheon, and then a burial service at our Wonjeon at the **historic Fort Lincoln Cemetery at 2:30 pm.**

We invite you to attend and join us in celebrating the life and ascension of a man with a heart of gold, whose simple idealism and enduring love built a legacy that will continue for generations.

### ***Family Was His Greatest Treasure***

From a young age, David held a deep longing for family. As an only child with just one distant cousin, he never had much family growing up. Maybe that is why he found his way to a church and movement that places family at the center of its belief. David joined the Unification Church in 1969 and quickly became a full-time member and embraced its family ideals.

David was blessed in marriage to Juliana Mittermueller in 1975. They were incredibly different, yet beautifully complementary. David was tall; Julia was short. David was an often-awkward idealist; Julia was pragmatic and grounded. David was an American with ancestry stretching all the way back to the Mayflower. Julia was a first-generation immigrant from the Austrian village of Woellersdorf. Their fathers were both pulled into World War II on opposite sides.



Together, through God's providence, they formed a deep and inseparable bond, where each needed things that the other could provide and they became functionally inseparable.

In the last several years, Julia became debilitated by Alzheimer's disease, and she has become house-bound, unable to go out. This was a source of grief for David, but he took heart in the fact that she is liberated from her worries. During these later years, his children and grandchildren, always the center of his heart, became his greatest treasure, and in this sense, he was in the end a very wealthy man!

***Daniel***, David's eldest, remained local in Rockville, Maryland and married Homi Onodera, who was born in Japan and raised in India. They have six children, Ariana, Naomi, Benjamin, Lillian, Christina and Julian.



***Aileen***, David's second child, married high school sweetheart Gray Sandridge and they live in Boulder, Colorado with daughters Violet and Thea.



***Manuela***, David's third child, found her way to Europe where she built a life with Oliver Hacke in Cologne, Germany. They have a daughter Mia and a son Liam.



***Dorothy***, David's youngest child, moved to Seattle where she married Miles Carter, and had two daughters Clementine and Josephine. Miles died unexpectedly in 2022 due to SUDEP.



Daniel and Homi also offered a daughter named Hazel to Hiromitsu and Kayo Masuda of Columbus, Ohio since they were unable to have children of their own. David proudly treasured and loved Hazel too as part of his extended family.

### ***A Rapid Transition, Surrounded by His Beloved Family***

David's health quickly began deteriorating in January, 2026 with a cascading series of health problems that included an unsuccessful prostate surgery and culminated in a diagnosis of stage IV colon cancer in March, 2026 followed shortly by a diagnosis of pneumonia.

David always said that he never wanted to be kept alive on life support, and when these final diagnoses came, he made the easy decision to decline medical intervention and switch to comfort care. In the end, he was surrounded day and night by his four children and ten of his twelve grandchildren. He moved to hospice on Saturday March 21<sup>st</sup> and ascended three days later. We all take comfort in the fact that his final suffering was brief.

## ***Lessons in David Hess's Life for the Rest of Us***

David idealize family above virtually everything else and he was almost explosive in his love of his children and grandchildren. God and heaven felt his heart and blessed him with family in great abundance. All his children inherited that heart and Daniel made that the focus of his work. That is surely David's first great lesson for us all. But his life offers many more lessons besides.



### **A pure heart**

Everyone who met dad marveled at the purity of his heart. Sometimes this looked childish to people around him. But at some level, we should love openly and without being cynical and without worrying what it looks like.

Jesus said (Matthew 18:3) "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." David lived with that kind of openness—loving freely, without hesitation or self-consciousness.

## **Faith, Idealism and Steadfastness**

David was a devoted follower of the Reverend Moon and the Unification Church throughout his life. Why? Maybe it is because the church's expansive vision matched his own. The church's ideal is to love all mankind and save the entire world. Literally.

It is very easy to see a vision like that and be cynical, and almost all of us spend a lot of time being cynical. But not David.

Rev. Moon said that the value of a person is in proportion to the size of his vision. Not his talent or charisma, leadership, intelligence or good looks. David was limited in more ways than we can count, as are we all. And yet his sights were always on the biggest challenges, like global Communism and the crisis of the family, and his thoughts and prayers were for the whole world. And so however plain his circumstances, he lived with his heart at this high level.

David always choked up at the second, third and fourth verses of his favorite song, *America the Beautiful* which recount the high-minded people who built America:

O beautiful for pilgrim feet  
Whose stern impassioned stress,  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat  
Across the wilderness!

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O beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife,  
Who more than self their country love  
And mercy more than life!

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O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years,  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears!

David, the Mayflower descendant, was a visionary as well. His legacy is greater than many others with greater skill sets but a smaller outlook.

### **Civil Rights and Service**

David volunteered for the Peace Corps in his early twenties and planned to serve overseas on agriculture projects. But his plans were derailed when, during training, the bicycle he was riding was struck by a car. He barely survived and spent three months in the hospital and nine more months in rehabilitation.

David arrived in Washington D.C. in 1968 as a young civil rights activist in the wake of Martin Luther King's assassination. Even after he joined the church in 1969, he devoted many years to a range of missions serving the poor of DC, including a food pantry/mission called So Others Might Eat, a mission serving the homeless called Church Without Walls, and tutoring high school equivalency.

Although he was occasionally the victim of muggings while volunteering in DC's toughest neighborhoods, David's heart toward those who had less than him never wavered. He went on to devote most of his career to civil rights work with the Labor Department, this time focusing on the rights of the disabled.

### **Frugality and generosity**

David was always incredibly frugal. He only owned modest used cars, lived in the same modest duplex for more than 40 years, wore clothes for a long time, and hated to spend any money on himself. He never chased status and was always content with what he had.

This extreme frugality put David on sound financial footing, enabled him to put all four children through college, and allowed him to give generously to church, a range of charities and to his children and grandchildren. In the final calculus of his life, David spent far more on other people than on himself and he kept that up to the very end, when he opted for the simplest path of care.

David Hess lived a quiet and humble life, yet his heart was deeply aligned with God. His legacy lives on in his family, in the lives he touched, and in the example he leaves behind. As we honor his ascension, we do so with both sorrow and hope—knowing that he continues his journey in the eternal spirit world embraced by our Heavenly Parent.