

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Statement on the Death of Phil Donahue

August 20, 2024

In Phil Donahue, our Nation has lost a trailblazing television icon who held up a mirror to America and united us around the toughest issues of our time.

A son of a working class, Irish Catholic family from Cleveland, Phil first honed his craft as a radio station assistant in university, before rising to transform television and reshape the national conversation.

Over close to 30 years, nearly 7,000 episodes, and 20 Emmys, he pioneered the live daytime talk show, helping change hearts and minds through honest and open dialogue. He broadcast the power of personal stories in living rooms across the country, interviewing everyone from our greatest stars to our forgotten neighbors. Insatiably curious and accepting, Phil saw every guest as worthy of interest and worked to build understanding, helping us see each other not as enemies, but as fellow Americans.

Through his extraordinary career in television and through thousands of daily conversations, Phil Donahue steered the national discourse and spoke to our better angels. He will be sorely missed.

Jill and I send our deepest condolences to the Donahue family and keep them close in our hearts, including his beloved wife of 44 years, Marlo Thomas, and his sister, children, and grandchildren.

May God bless you, Phil.

NOTE: The statement referred to Kathy Taube, sister, Michael, Kevin, Daniel, and Mary Rose Donahue, children, and Connor and Kenzie Donahue, grandchildren, of Mr. Donahue.

Categories: Statements by the President : Phil Donahue, death.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Donahue, Connor; Donahue, Daniel; Donahue, Kenzie; Donahue, Kevin; Donahue, Mary Rose; Donahue, Michael; Donahue, Phil; Taube, Kathy; Thomas, Marlo.

Subjects: Deaths, Phil Donahue.

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