



Donald Allen Cohen

MAY 24, 1933 - NOV 26, 2025



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Donald Allen Cohen, known to family and friends as Allen and lovingly called “Sabba” by his grandchildren, passed away peacefully on November 30, 2025, at the age of 92. His long life was marked by intellectual curiosity, creativity, humor, and a deep devotion to the family he cherished.

Born in Akron, Ohio, in 1933 to Norman and Faye Cohen, Allen was the middle child between his brothers Marvin Sanford and Joseph Richard. From an early age he showed both a talent for science and a lifelong appetite for knowledge — qualities that shaped every chapter of his life.

Allen earned his Ph.D. in Physics from Case Western Reserve University in 1958, beginning a distinguished career that blended scientific rigor with imaginative problem-solving. He served proudly in the United States Air Force and later spent decades as a scientist and defense contractor specializing in advanced computer modeling and analytical systems related to national security.

In 1953, Allen married Phyllis Schwager, the love of his life. Their 72-year marriage was grounded in mutual respect, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to their family. In 1968, they made a defining decision: moving with their four young children to Israel, where Allen worked for Israel Aircraft Industries and other defense-related organizations. This period became one of the most meaningful of their lives, connecting their family’s story to heritage, identity, and community.

After returning to the United States, Allen continued his technical work until retirement — and then continued working anyway. In later years, he collaborated with his son Mark and son-in-law Ken on sophisticated financial modeling software, contributing insight and energy until the very end.

Behind the scientist was also an artist and storyteller. Allen painted in oils and acrylics, producing expressive and imaginative works. He was a poet from early in life, entertaining his children with humorous, rhythmic tales about a cowboy named Pa Poke, a beloved family creation. His later



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series, “Poelitics,” was not a new emergence of poetic impulse but an extension of his familiar voice — commentary on politics and culture, sharp, humorous, and unmistakably Allen.

He was a complex and vibrant presence — brilliant, curious, intense, sometimes overwhelming, often funny, and always fully himself. He wanted to understand the world and to matter within it. These impulses, while challenging at times, came from deep passion and a longing for connection. In his later years, a softer and more reflective side emerged, a gift his family treasures.

Allen is survived by his beloved wife Phyllis; his children Nicki (Ken), Mark (Leigh), and Lee (Cindy); his brother Rich (Sue); his grandchildren Naomi (Amanda), Ilana, Dana (Joe), Binyomin (Aviva), Michael (Maya), Ari (Ariella), Sarit (Mitch), Rachel (Cayce), and Holly (Tim); and 19 great-grandchildren (with more on the way). He was preceded in death by his son Dale, his parents Norman and Faye, and his brother Marvin.




Those who knew Allen will remember his sharp mind, his humor, his stories, his art, his poetry, and the spark that stayed with him throughout all ninety-two years of his life. His influence — as a husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, physicist, artist, thinker, and storyteller — will endure through the generations he helped shape.

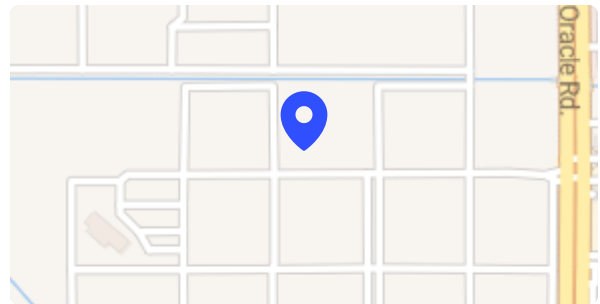
A private family service was held on November 30, 2025.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to University of Arizona Hillel, Jewish Family and Children’s Services of Southern Arizona, or the Healthier, Greener, Kinder Foundation in his memory.






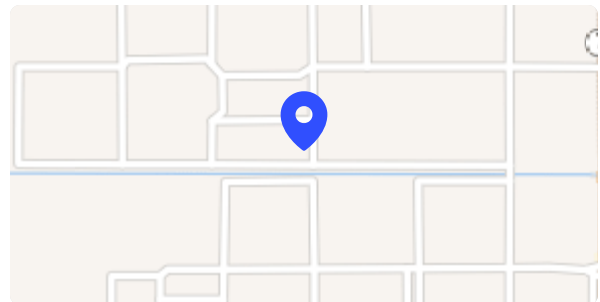
Funeral Service

-  **Sunday**, November 30, 2025
-  11:00 AM MT
-  **Evergreen Mortuary Chapel**
3015 North Oracle Road, Tucson AZ 85705





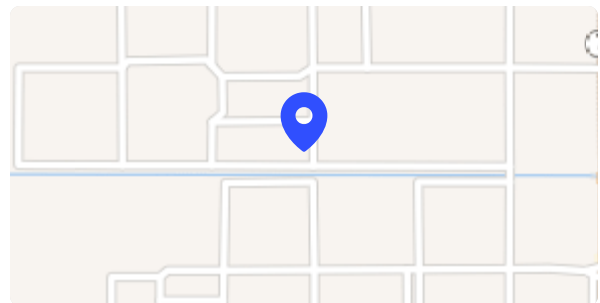
Committal Service

-  **Sunday**, November 30, 2025
-  12:00 PM MT
-  **Evergreen Cemetery**
3015 North Oracle Road, Tucson AZ 85705



Cemetery Details

-  **Evergreen Cemetery**
3015 North Oracle Road, Tucson AZ 85705
-  **520-257-4831**





MC

Mark Cohen posted:

This is what I read at Dad's funeral: I stand here today with deep love for my father — love that includes all of him, not a simplified version. Dad was a complex man. He was brilliant, curious, intense, sometimes overwhelming, often funny, and always unmistakably himself. And he was committed to building a life for our family that had purpose and meaning. Dad served in the Air Force and spent most of his professional life as a scientist and defense contractor. One of the most defining choices he and Mom made was moving all four of us — Nicki, me, Lee, and Dale — to Israel in 1968. That decision says a lot about him. But it says just as much about Mom. She had the courage and trust to follow his lead, to cross an ocean with four young children, and help build a life in a completely new place. In Israel, Dad worked for Israeli Aircraft Industries and later for another company supporting the military. And it was during those years that he told one of his favorite stories — that he had scored a ride in the back seat of a fighter jet. As a kid, I thought that was heroic. Years later, when I was serving in the United States Navy as a JAG, he asked if I could get such a ride in a Navy jet. I explained the training and clearances, and mission necessity required, and the conversation moved on. But decades later, he quietly told me that the ride had never happened. He apologized. And that moment revealed something tender and honest in him. It wasn't the details of the story that mattered. It was what the story meant to him — a longing to feel extraordinary, to feel included in the world of daring and accomplishment that he admired. And it mattered to him, later in life, to tell the truth. I'll admit, after that, I sometimes wondered about other stories he told over the years. He loved to share tales — like the one about going around a crooked gambling establishment, collecting the first easy win at each table until they threw him out. It's a great story. It might even be true. But after the jet story, part of me wondered. And part of me didn't mind wondering. Because the stories weren't about arrogance. What I saw was a man who needed to feel capable, to feel intellectually present, to feel like he belonged in every conversation. That need could be irritating at times, yes — but it came from a softer place, a vulnerable place, not from superiority. I remember years ago, Nicki was working on her PhD dissertation in Educational Psychology. She told me about how she tried to explain her work to him, and he kept interrupting, insisting on what he already "knew" about her field. It was frustrating for her, and familiar to all of us. But looking back, I see what was underneath it. He wanted to understand. He wanted to be included. He wanted to remain important in the lives of his children, even as we grew into our own areas of knowledge. That was his language. And yet, in his later years, something truly softened in him. His "Poelitics" poems arrived like dispatches from a newly opened room inside him — witty, sharp, reflective, sometimes even tender. When he responded to my own writing, it was with a depth I hadn't seen when I was younger. When I wrote the line, "Creation gathers itself," he loved it. He held onto it. He reflected on it. And I've often wondered why that line spoke to him so deeply. That line — something I wrote about the quiet moment before something new emerges — spoke to him deeply. I think it's because he understood, in his own way, that life is not a straight line. A life gathers itself. It gathers from striving and longing, from imagination and regret, from love and from loss. And he knew loss. The loss of my brother Dale at age 44 stayed with him. It shaped him, quietly and permanently. Through all of this — the stories, the need to know, the intensity, the vulnerability, the humor — he cared. He tried. He influenced us, taught us, challenged us, and loved us in the ways he knew how. We became who we are, in part, by learning how to stand with him, against him, and ultimately beside him. Today, we remember



Tribute Wall

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him honestly — not perfectly, but lovingly. Not idealized, but whole. Dad, thank you — for what you gave, for what you tried to give, and even for what you struggled to give. May your memory be a blessing. Mark Cohen, Allen's son.

December 2 at 12:49 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Donald by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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