Howard A. Minners

1 September 1931 - 22 October 2026

Born in September 1931 in Rockville Centre, Long Island, New York, Howard Minners (95) held a Bachelors Degree in Chemistry from Princeton University; a MD from Yale University School of Medicine and a Masters in Public Health from Harvard University School of Public Health. He was board certified in Aerospace Medicine with a distinguished 10-year career in the Air Force with assignments that included four years as the NASA Flight Surgeon for the Project Mercury and Gemini astronauts. He further served 21 years in the US Public Health Service (USPHS) including prominent assignments at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) focusing on vaccine development, transplantation immunology, research reagents and geographic medicine. He also served for three years as the head of the Office of Research at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. Upon his return to the US, Howard was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral, Assistant Surgeon General in the US Public Health Service (USPHS), Office of International Health, with a subsequent assignment as the Science Advisor to the US Agency for International Development (USAID). He retired from the USPHS in 1987 after 31 years of prominent service.

Feeding off of his son's interest in Ford Model A's, Howard grew a deep historical interest in the development and era surrounding the Ford Model A. The introduction and advertising campaign for the New Ford caught Howard's attention inspiring him to collect original era Ford advertisements and sales brochures from all over the world. His extensive international collection of Model A advertisements and sales brochures was one of the largest in the world. Howard however did not collect for himself, but rather enjoyed sharing his knowledge with fellow collectors. To share his knowledge, Howard formed the "Model A Ad Collectors Region" of the Model A Restorers Club (MARC) and the "Model A Ad Collectors Chapter" of the Model A Ford Club of America (MAFCA) with members enjoying his quarterly newsletter, Model A Ad Collectors, in every corner of the globe.

His science-based mindset fueled his and his late wife Gretchen's meticulous restoration of their 1930 Cabriolet, which was subsequently awarded a MARC of Excellence, a MAFCA Award of Excellence, as well as a Henry Award. This success, along with his passion for researched details, motivated Howard to become a Master Model A Judge with an area of expertise in upholstery. Howard and his late wife, Gretchen, spent years researching and documenting the correct original upholstery for the Ford Model A at both The Henry Ford as well as deep in the personal archives of like-minded collectors. To share with fellow collectors what he had learned, he joined what would become The Model A Ford

Foundation, Inc. (MAFFI) Upholstery Project. Howard, and Gretchen, spearheaded the Upholstery Project's research by collecting original upholstery samples from members of the Model A community. So that all members could benefit from his research, he and his team compiled the material in three binders containing samples of both original upholstery material and replacement material. One of those binders is available for research at the Model A Museum in The Gilmore Car Museum, Hickory Corners, Michigan, with the other two distributed to the two national clubs.

In 1995, Howard became the President of MAFFI and, during two terms as president, he led The Foundation through a period of significant growth. Under his leadership and guidance, Howard organized a team of volunteers over several years to document and index the thousands of mechanical engineering drawings, which are stored in boxes in the bowels of the Benson Ford Research Center of the Henry Ford. Because of this new, organized access to the original Ford parts drawings, reproduction parts manufacturers now are able to make more accurate replacement parts for our Model A's.

In 2009, when MAFFI was looking for a location for its new museum, Howard and his late wife, Gretchen, attended the annual meeting at Merillville, Indiana, with an exploratory stop along the way at The Gilmore. Based on Howard's strong recommendation, the Trustees subsequently made the trip and began to form a consensus that the business relationship offered by The Gilmore Car Museum was superior to all the other offers then under consideration. One year later, at the annual meet in Vancouver, BC (2010), a memorandum of understanding was signed with The Gilmore Car Museum. At the time, Howard was also a member of the museum building selection committee. It was through his research in his personal Ford literature archives that he located and proposed what would later be selected as the general design of The Model A Museum building.

Howard was a long and dedicated board trustee of MAFFI as well as an active member of the MAFFI Investment Committee, insuring that the memberships funds continued to grow and will be able to sustain The Museum's operations in perpetuity.

Early in his service to his local Model A club (the George Washington Chapter / Mount Vernon Region) Howard was entrusted to be the club's newsletter editor. He didn't just write the newsletter however, he transformed it into a valuable, relevant and focused publication which ultimately was awarded the coveted MARC Best Newsletter Award, followed for several years by the MARC Award of Continuing Newsletter Excellence. He also served on the local club Board of Directors as well as the National Liaison to both national Model A clubs.

Speaking of national clubs, Howard was not only an active leader in his local club, and MAFFI, but he also passionately contributed to both the Model A Ford Club of America (MAFCA) and the Model A Restorers Club (MARC) where he ultimately served for four years as National Secretary of MARC. While not busy judging cars, or hosting seminars at the annual national or membership meets, Howard could usually be found playing the piano, or ukulele, as background music for the era fashion shows or awards banquets or

manning the “MAFFI table” to help grow the MAFFI membership, increase MAFFI community influence and promote financial donations to MAFFI. For his lifetime achievements, extraordinary service and significant contributions to the Model A hobby, in 2001, he was awarded MARC’s highest honor: The Ken Brady Award.

In September 2022, Howard was inducted into MAFFI’s Model A Ford Hall of Fame, among the best-of-the-best in the Model A hobby.

When not focused on Ford Model A’s, Howard also enjoyed researching and collecting (and showing) early dated coins as well as pre-war Lionel Standard Gauge Trains of which he had an extensive collection.

He was an active member of MARC, MAFC, MAFFI, GWC, AACA, ANA, ANS, and the TCA.

On 22 October 2026, Howard passed away in his assisted living apartment in Bethesda, MD. He was predeceased by his first wife, Gretchen (80; October 24, 2011) and his second wife, Eleanor (93; June 11, 2024). He is survived by his two sons Todd and Bradford, their two wives and two granddaughters.