

Remembering August Piper

John Selsky with Fred Kleist

The Seattle Chess Club regrets to announce the death of Dr. August T. Piper, Jr., on January 13, 2024, in Seattle. He was 80 years old.

August was the club's President for 19 years, from 2002 until his retirement in 2021. The club's board awarded him a Lifetime Membership in September 2021 for his many years of dedicated service. In addition, August was the club's Most Valuable Player for the majority of those years, participating in almost every event. He was profiled in Northwest Chess in March 2021, along with Carol Kleist, on the occasion of their retirements from the Seattle Chess Club board.

A native of St. Louis, Missouri, August graduated from Yale University in

1965 and received his M.D. degree from Howard University College of Medicine. He was a psychiatrist by training and completed his residency at the University of Washington in 1981. He was attached to Swedish Hospital and had a private psychiatry practice in Seattle for many years. He authored a number of academic papers and a book (*Hoax and reality: The bizarre world of multiple personality disorder*; 1997) on multiple personality disorder and periodically was an expert witness at trials regarding that condition. He served on the board of the Country Doctor Community Clinic, a Seattle health care organization founded by the local Black Panthers in the 1970s.

August Piper was a character, a rash and brash character in his signature red

beret. Fred Kleist, SCC's tournament director, recalls his first sighting of August back in the late 1980s. He was carpooling with three other players to the Keres Memorial in Vancouver, BC. As they were driving up I-5, a red sports car zoomed by, August at the wheel. Ten miles up the road they passed that sports car stopped on the shoulder with a stern-looking state patrolman looming over it. August got a speeding ticket. They all ended up at the same B&B in Vancouver, and as usual, August was late for breakfast.

At the Larry Evans Memorial in Reno, I remember seeing August copping a snooze lying across three side chairs before a game. I can also remember him rushing into the playing hall 58 minutes after a round started and making his first move just before timing out. That was something of a trademark of August's.

Despite the rather rough descriptors that he applied to fellow chess players, August was a genuinely kind and caring person. He would often give players rides to the bus station and would buy meals for those with less resources.

In his game, Fred recalls, August played the Queens Gambit Accepted, the Réti System and the Najdorf Sicilian. In fact, he used to call himself "Mr. Najdorf" on occasion. Coincidentally, I was August's opponent for his last US Chess rated game, on July 1, 2022.

August was debilitated in his later years with multiple health issues. Although wheelchair-bound, he visited the club at its Green Lake premises several times in 2022 with the assistance of his old friend Henry Louie. We at the Seattle Chess Club will greatly miss this dedicated and colorful man.



August Piper at the 2018 Seattle Chess Classic.
Photo credit: Henry Louie.