

Published January 27, 2016

WILLIAM REGINALD SHEPHERD, JR., 83

William (Bill) Reginald Shepherd, Jr. of Lafayette, California passed away peacefully on Sunday, January 17, 2016 after a long and valiant battle against Parkinson's Disease. Bill was born in Fargo, North Dakota to Zoe and William Shepherd, Sr. and spent his childhood in Pittsburg, California.

Bill had a successful career in the auto business as the owner of several car dealerships, including Shepherd Chevrolet, Shepherd Volkswagen, Shepherd Pontiac, and Shepherd Honda/Suzuki. He was given his love of cars by his father who owned Chevrolet dealerships in Pittsburg and Antioch. Young Bill washed windows at his father's dealership and took note of how to run a successful business. In 1990, Bill was honored by being named Time Magazine's Car Dealer of the Year.

Bill graduated from Acalanes High School (1951) and attended Stanford University and University of Oregon, earning his degree in 1955. During college, Bill enlisted in the Air Force and served four years as a Reservist.

Bill was introduced to the love of his life, Mary Jo Miller, by dear friends while water skiing on the

Sacramento River. Their meeting was "love at first sight", and the two married three months later in 1961. Soon after their marriage, they started to grow their family and had four boys in the span of six years. Life was full, fun and exciting with summers spent on the lake at Tahoe and winter weekends spent skiing at Squaw Valley. Bill and Mary Jo loved raising their family in Lafayette and took great pride in all that their boys achieved. When asked how they happened to have four boys who were all so tall, they replied, "A lot of love." Bill had a generous nature and welcomed strangers as if they were family. He took a genuine interest in the lives of others and enjoyed sharing stories into the wee hours of the morning.

Bill enjoyed boating on Lake Tahoe and acquired several antique wooden boats over the years. He was able to enjoy rides on the lake last summer, which was a highlight during his final year. Bill and Mary Jo loved traveling together, entertaining, spending time with friends, dining at Trader Vic's, vacationing in Hawaii, cheering on the Golden Bears, celebrating Christmas, and skiing. As a couple, they hardly spent a day apart. It was rare to find Bill without a book in his hand, as he was an avid reader. Bill enjoyed hunting and the outdoors. He was also a supporter of Boy Scouts, proudly leading all four sons to receive their Eagle Scout award.

Above all, Bill loved his family. Family was the center of his life. He was an incredibly devoted and caring husband, a loving and supportive father, and a dedicated "Grampy" to his grandchildren. He is survived by his wife Mary Jo of 55 years; his sister Nancy Hudson of Alamo; his sons William, Robert (Kimberly), Richard (Lisa), and James (Jennifer). He is also survived by his ten grandchildren: Katherine, Morgan, Kristoffer, Anne, Elizabeth, Amanda, Jeffrey, John, Matthew and Sarah.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to Vic Guterrez for his loving care and support of Bill and Mary Jo during Bill's illness. We will forever appreciate the loving friendship he shared with Bill.

Bill will be remembered for his kindness, ready smile, saint-like patience, quick one-liners and humor, captivating storytelling, genuine character, and warm personality. Bill's sons and grandchildren will continue his legacy while holding their cherished father and grandfather in their hearts.

A memorial service will be held on Friday, February 5, 2016 at 4:00 PM at the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church (49 Knox Drive, Lafayette). A celebration of Bill's life will follow immediately at Orinda Country Club (315 Camino Sobrante, Orinda).

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts in Bill's honor may be made to The Friends of Cal Crew - 10 Clay Street, Suite 200, Oakland, CA 94607 or by visiting <http://calcrew.com/donate.html>

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA