



William Vernor

August 20, 1944 - March 25, 2020

William (Bill) Laurence Vernor, 75, of Yorba Linda, CA, passed peacefully March 25, 2020, at St. Jude's Medical Center in Fullerton, CA after suffering a stroke at his home on March 16, 2020.

Bill was born on August 20, 1944, in Charlotte, NC, to parents Annabelle (Smith) and Harold Vernor. Bill attended high school at Western Military Academy in Alton, IL, and graduated from Wake Forest College in North Carolina on June 5, 1967, with a Bachelor of Science degree. Bill served for two years with the Illinois National Guard, beginning with the rank of Brevet Second Lieutenant.

He resided in Edwardsville, IL, and later in Collinsville, IL, before moving to Southern California in 1980, where he lived in several communities until moving to his last residence in Yorba Linda in 2010. For the many years Bill resided in Illinois, he was a sportswriter for the Metro-East Journal in East St. Louis. His beat was baseball, and he was a member of the Baseball Writers' Association of America. He also was the beat writer for live music for the paper and wrote countless reviews of concerts in and around the St. Louis Metro area for many years.

After moving to California, Bill held many positions in publishing and marketing. Bill was a gifted writer and proven communicator. Bill worked as production manager for Fancy Publications and then as manager, print production/direct-mail for Harcourt/Classroom Connect. After that he held management positions with Enterprise Comm, New Century Mortgage and The Spritle Group.

Among Bill's many passions, that included sailing, scuba diving and skiing, indeed golf was near the top. He was a natural athlete who excelled at nearly any sport he tried, but golf remained a constant throughout his life. He went to Wake Forest after being recruited by fellow alma mater, Arnold Palmer. Even into his 70s, Bill's handicap was 3 or 4. He shot below his age many times, including one of his last rounds where he shot a hole-in-one on his way to carding a 75, his age at that time. Golf was so important to him that he worked at El Prado Golf Course upon retirement. That allowed him to play free, which he did with a rotating group of friends and compatriots. Bill prided himself on carrying his bag and walking the course, which he played three or four times a week for decades.

Sports were a vital part of Bill's life. Each year he could not wait for the NCAA annual

March Madness tournament. Though hardly a technophile, he always managed to MacGyver a bunch of video recording devices so he could record each game to watch. He also loved motorsports and sportscars. Starting with his beloved 1966 Austin Healy 3000, he owned a succession of 2-seater roadsters—always with a manual transmission, and with the main criteria that his golf clubs fit into the trunk.

Bill was a true lover of "The Blues" and both classic and prog-rock music. He had a deep appreciation for music of many genres and artists. By his count, he attended more than 1,000 intimate to epic-sized concerts from Europe to New York to Chicago to St. Louis to Los Angeles, including the famous Woodstock Festival in 1969. Bill became good friends with many of the musicians he followed, including one of his favorites, with whom he was most dedicated - Walter Trout. As a writer and journalist, Bill possessed the magical "Press Pass," which allowed him backstage at many of these concert events to network with many musical artists and left with many of their cherished autographs. Bill reveled in attending concerts with close friends, particularly his best friend Barney Davey. Bill was also a master of detailed and colorful concert reviews, another of the many examples of his tremendous talent for writing.

Bill was also a purveyor and collector of fine wines and thoroughly enjoyed sharing his exceptional wine collection with friends, often while indulging in a gourmet meal of Beef Wellington or Steak Diane.

Bill was a man of many talents, and he experienced much in his extraordinary life, but of all things, his love and dedication to his friends was his true talent.

Bill is preceded in death by his parents and his dear friends of many years, Lois (Buchta) Ladd, Michael Ladd, and Neil Buchta, who he considered his sister and brothers. Bill is survived by his extended family of many loving friends, who will deeply miss him, his undying love, his unique humor, and his sincere devotion.

A private memorial service will be held next spring (2021) to honor Bill's final wishes.

Comments



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Chuck Smith - May 10, 2020 at 11:18 AM



“ Good Morning -

I was a classmate, and roommate, of Bill's at Western Military Academy. We were Class of '62. He and Alan Segur and I occupied a 3-man room in "D" barracks, 1st floor, our Senior year. Alan was from Watseka, Il. and I was from the Lansing, Mi. area.

Bill and I were heavily involved in sports and I remember he was QB of the "B" team our senior year. I believe Bill would have been on the Varsity "A" team, but he was not a very big guy at that time, probably 120-130#. I had been Co-Captain of the "B" team the previous year, but had moved up to the Varsity, where I found out how good I WASN'T.

Over the years we tried to locate Bill, without success, and I wish we could have found him before now. Our Class President, Bud Erickson, found Bill's obit just yesterday. Bud knew Bill pretty well, as it was a small school. Bud lives in Hawaii now and he and I are trying to locate as many of our classmates as we can, possibly for a 60th reunion.

After a 40 year career in Indianapolis, I have returned to my home state upon retirement. I live within "a stone's throw" of Lake Michigan. My hobby is a 2003 Tiara 4000 Express that I keep here in the harbor here at Saugatuck.

Here's wishing Biil a soft landing, in a good place, on his final flight. It sounds like he had a great, full life!

Charles J. "Chuck" Smith
6410 Palmetto Ct.
Saugatuck, Mi. 48453
chucksmith44@gmail.com

Chuck Smith - May 10, 2020 at 10:54 AM



“ Monica Reed lit a candle in memory of William Vernor



Monica Reed - April 13, 2020 at 02:45 PM



“ I'm deeply sad to know I've lost my bestie and running buddy of 50 years, my oldest and dear friend, Bill Vernor passed away in his sleep at 2:45 am on March 25. He had suffered a stroke days earlier. The very kind nursing staff at St. Jude's hospital made sure he was comfortable and that he was not alone when he left this world. Bill was a good guy and we had so much fun.

Bill and I have known each other since 1971, just months shy of 50 years. Our first encounter was through a mutual friend to see a concert at the Mississippi River Festival at SIUE in Edwardsville. That was the first of hundreds of live music events we'd attend over the next five decades. From seeing Springsteen in massive football stadiums, the Pink Floyd Wall concert in Nassau County Stadium in NY, to seedy blues bars from St. Louis to Chicago to California, if we had a chance, we would go.

In the early years of our friendship, we spent summers waterskiing on Alton Lake. Later on, we snow skied in Big Bear, Tahoe, Reno, and Mammoth Mountain. We took sailing lessons together and had so many fun days sailing off the coast of SoCal. Bill introduced me to the wonderful experience of drinking fine wine. He loved to cook and eat. Beef Wellington was a favorite.

We were also business partners for several years and worked together for several more at Insurance Marketing Services. A gig that he got me and which led to a succession of better jobs with compensation I could not have comprehended was possible.

We've attended the Big Blues Bender four-day festival in Vegas three of the past four years. The schedule was to eat breakfast, then shoot craps until 2 pm when the performances began and would run to 2 am. We had down payments to go back and do it again in September.

He introduced me to Walter Trout and Rod Piazza. I got him hooked on Delbert McClinton and Ronnie Earl. When we lived and worked in Chicago, we spent many weekends hanging out in the legendary blues clubs there. We were two fun-loving guys who loved each other like a brother from another mother.

What I mention here are just highlights of fifty years of enduring friendship. As the years rolled by and I moved from OC to STL to PHX, months could pass without communication, but it didn't matter. In seconds when together we'd be in sync as if we were roommates. Oh, right. We were roomies for years, including a fun stint in Venice beach.

On February 10, Bill and I met up in Vegas to see Van Morrison at Caesars Colosseum. A few weeks later he shot a hole-in-one on his way to a 73 beating his age by two strokes. As a lifelong golfer who was recruited by Arnold Palmer to play for Wake Forest, he was ecstatic.

I miss him already. Maybe it's too much to expect when you are in your 70s to still have a running buddy who loves the same things as you, but that was what we had in each other. He changed my life in many ways and he'll do it once again now.

The Allman Brothers were always a top draw for us. We probably saw them ten or more times over the years. Fittingly, they have a song, "Nobody Left to Run with Anymore." While that may be true for me now, he leaves me with so many memories of adventures together that will stay with me always, and I'll be okay.

Losses such as this along with the coronavirus pandemic re-emphasize what we already know. Love the people in your life by showing and telling them today. Solomon Burke sang, "Don't wait till I'm gone to send me flowers. Send 'em to me now"

While no flowers are ordered, I'm sending my love to each of you! You see how easy that is to do? Give it a try.

Send up your prayers to Bill in rock 'n roll heaven. You know the one with the championship golf course, five-star dining, and a live blues club.



Barney - April 13, 2020 at 01:40 PM



“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



Barney Davey - April 13, 2020 at 01:24 PM



“ I was fortunate to meet Bill on a couple visits back to Illinois with mutual friends. What a wonderful person and he was so full of life. Journey well Bill. ~Linda Trebing

Linda Boyer Trebing - April 11, 2020 at 05:21 PM



“ Our world as we know it has changed. Our Dear Friend of 45 years will be greatly missed. Boy, did we have some stories. So many great times: listening to music, enjoying great gourmet meals and indulging in many amazing wines from his extensive collection.

Bill was a great friend to so many wonderful people. He was a lover of The Blues and Classic Rock and Roll and attended many concerts. Even becoming friends with many famous musicians. He loved golf, sailing, scuba diving and skiing. But most of all, he loved his friends. As Bill had no family to speak of, he considered his friends his family.

Bill was like a brother to Ken and I and an Uncle to our daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter.

Bill is preceded in death by his long time friends Lois (Buchta) Ladd, Mike Ladd and Neal Buchta. They were his family for the last 6 decades and we know they are all at the Big Party together now. Rock On, Bill, and save a seat for us.

Love our T-Bear #OWLSTRONG

Cheryl and Ken Vondrasek

Cheryl Vondrasek - April 08, 2020 at 06:22 PM



“ We will greatly miss Bill as an employee, a friend and an El Prado advocate.

Bill's last round of golf was at El Prado earlier this month. During that round, Bill hit two milestones; he shot his age and he hit a hole in one.

Bill was a gifted writer, a lover of music and a collector of wine. In Bill's younger years, he played college golf at Wake Forrest and was recruited by the king, Arnold Palmer.

Bill, we already miss you very much. Thank you for all you did for El Prado and for all the lessons and memories you shared along the way.

Rest In Peace our Friend

-Kevin Knutson, El Prado Golf Courses

Kevin Knutson - April 02, 2020 at 02:55 AM