



Bill Wise

May 6, 1928 - April 23, 2014

William (Bill) Lytle Wise died on April 23, 2014, at the age of 85. Bill was born on May 6, 1928 in Highland Park, Michigan, the son of William Howard Wise and Marjorie LeVeque Wise, and the older brother of Rosemary Jean Wise. Anyone who knew Bill would probably agree that he was a high-energy guy who always got things done (his way!).

At East Lansing High School Bill ran track and cross-country, played the trumpet, and was a member of the Varsity and Band-Orchestra clubs. He achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, which was a source of great pride throughout his life. One summer he worked as a lifeguard for the Boy Scouts at Camp Greilick near Traverse City. The scenic setting between Bass and Spider lakes ignited his love of the Grand Traverse area where he would eventually return with his wife Jeanne to practice law and raise his family.

In 1946, Bill followed in the footsteps of both of his parents and enrolled at University of Michigan. His years at U of M were foundational thanks to rigorous academic training, enthusiastic participation in clubs, and serving as Midshipman in the Navy ROTC program. He joined the Theta Delta Chi fraternity, which provided him with many opportunities for songs, pranks and, most importantly, lifelong friendships with a core group of fraternity brothers. During his junior year he was inducted into Michigamua—the secret society located on the top floor of the Michigan Union—where he was given the nickname, “Bill Not-So-Damn Wise.” He served as president of the Student Union during his senior year and was a member of the Scabbard Blade Military Honor Society.

Bill grew up during the Great Depression and supported himself through college. One summer when he was working as a custodian “cleaning toilets” in a factory in Detroit, he got a collect call from a roommate and Navy friend who invited Bill to join him for a party in New York City. Bill was mad about having to pay for the collect call; nevertheless, he hitchhiked to New York City, borrowed a suit and tie and attended the party, which happened to be in the Starlight Room at the Waldorf Astoria.

In 1950, Bill graduated with a degree in Business Administration and entered U of M Law

School. He married the love of his life, Jeanne Nesbitt Wise, on Dec. 28, 1951. Jeanne died on November 14, 2011. Soon after Bill graduated from law school in 1953, he and Jeanne traded the banks of the Huron River in Ann Arbor, Michigan, for the shores of San Francisco Bay in Oakland, California. Bill was a Lieutenant JG and served as Assistant Legal Officer in the Navy Supply Corps. Bill and Jeanne reveled in the California sunshine and feasted on artichokes (only 5 cents!). They were transferred to Bayonne, New Jersey, where their first child, Kathryn, was born.

In 1955, Harry Running interviewed Bill for the position of Assistant Prosecutor in Harry's law firm in Traverse City, Michigan. The interview lasted only 15 minutes. According to Bill, once Harry learned that he had served in the Navy, Harry hired him on the spot. In the early days, Bill was one of only four lawyers in Traverse City. He provided counsel throughout the region at Running & Wise Attorneys at Law (currently Running Wise & Ford, PLC) from 1955 to 1995. He was a member of the Probate and Trust Law and Family Law Sections of the State Bar of Michigan and the Grand Traverse-Leelanau-Antrim County Bar Association. He was a lecturer for the Institute of Continuing Legal Education (ICLE) and wrote "Mid-Trial and Post-Trial Motion Practice," a chapter in "Michigan Civil Procedure During Trial" and contributed to "Introducing Evidence at Trial" (ICLE). Bill was nominated by U.S. Senator Bob Griffin for admission to practice law before the U.S. Supreme Court, and on June 14, 1970, Bill was sworn in at a ceremony in the Supreme Court Building in Washington D.C.

Bill and Jeanne built a house on West Bay in 1959 where they raised their four children, Kathy, Anne, Will and Chris. When he wasn't at work, you might find Bill polishing his car in his garage (which was as clean as an operating room!) while listening to Ernie Harwell call the action of a Tigers game on his transistor radio. Or you might catch him building a bonfire on the beach, grilling burgers and bringing out guitars and ukuleles for a family hootenanny. At sunset you might hear him telling his young children stories of Lulabelle, the Pink Fairy and her fish Glub Glub who lived in the pink clouds over West Bay. Or you might see him running in the Cherry Festival Fun Run or pausing on the Big Burn at Snowmass, Colorado, latest video camera model in hand, filming Jeanne and kids as they skied down the mountain. For more than 30 years you could find Bill and Jeanne with their Theta Delt comrades cheering on the Wolverines at U of M football games.

Bill had deep roots in the Traverse City community and many close friends. He was a member of the Traverse City Rotary, Grace Episcopal Church where he served on the Vestry, and a bridge club that provided good food and cocktails as well as cards. He was the last surviving elder of the Labor Day Picnic group, now in its 59th year. Bill and Jeanne moved to Leland, Michigan after Bill retired.

To our Bill—dedicated husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, son, counselor, and friend—we salute you and will miss you dearly.

Bill is survived by daughter Kathy Huschke and her husband John Huschke of White Cloud, MI, daughter Anne Reid and her husband Dave Hurley of Seattle, WA, son Will Wise and his wife Chitlada Thaveesri Wise of Portland, OR, son Chris Wise and his wife Becky Gucwa of Ann Arbor, MI, nine grandchildren, two great grandchildren, sister Rosemary Wise Hiles of Saint Clair Shores, MI and sister-in-law Sally Nesbitt Goddard of Alpena, MI.

Memorial contributions in Bill's honor may be directed to Grace Episcopal Church, 341 Washington St., Traverse City, MI 49684, and the Leelanau Conservancy, P.O. Box 1007, 105 North First Street, Leland, MI 49654.

A visitation will be held on June 18, 2014 in the evening from 4 to 6 pm at the Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home, 305 6th St., and a memorial service will be held on June 19, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. at Grace Episcopal Church, 341 Washington St., Traverse City, MI 49684.

Cemetery

Ogdensburg Cemetery
Center Road
Traverse City, MI, 49686

Events

JUN 18 Visitation 04:00PM - 06:00PM
Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home
305 Sixth St, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

JUN 19 Funeral Service 11:00AM
Grace Episcopal Church
341 Washington, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

Comments



“ Kathy, Chris, and family....Joe and I moved to Traverse City newly married, and I was having a hard time adjusting to living so far away from the big city (Chicago), my family (in Chicago) and my former work family (a lawfirm downtown)! Your dad hired me and things began to turn around! WLW taught me all about estate planning and I have been happily working in that field ever since. I worked with Bill until he retired, but remained very good friends. Bill started a baby pool when my first was born, and told me to "put a cork in it" when I went into labor the day before his birthday - so, guess what, she was born on his birthday, and he won the baby pool - which he gave me the winnings and told me to start an education trust for her! All my family was invited to stay in Leland throughout the years, whether for a weekend, or just a visit and a tour! :) The Fourth of July parties were Huge fun! I swear, every year I'd ask Bill what time the parade started and one of us would have to look it up - could never remember if it started at 1 or 3! Ha! Bill and Jeanne are a part of many wonderful family memories! They were sooooo awesome! We'll miss them.

Cheryl Stayman (Joe, Elizabeth, & Sarah, too)

Cheryl Stayman - June 18, 2014 at 08:19 AM



“ Dear Kathy, Anne, Will & Chris

I was so sad to hear of your Dad's passing, spending time with your family while growing up has given me many memories that I'll always cherish. Your Dad was a great guy, the consummate gentleman and good sport, he set a great example that left an impact on me during my formative years. Unfortunately I won't be able to make it to his visitation or funeral, as I'll be on a family trip out west but I think your Dad would understand, as family trips were such an important part of the fabric of the Wise family. But while I won't be there in body, I'll be there in spirit, thinking about all of you and especially of Uncle Bill.

Jim Sweeney

Jim Saweeney - June 17, 2014 at 07:14 PM



“ I met Bill when I began singing with the residents at Traverse Manor each week. Bill and I became friends and though I suppose I shouldn't have favorites - I did - and it was Bill. I learned just a bit about him in the short months I knew him and it has been wonderful reading about his rich life and the many contributions he made to the world and his family. I am not surprised. Bill had a way of making you feel like a million bucks. He was always interested in what was going on in my life and he always joined in the singing enthusiastically. (Take Me out to the Ballgame was probably his favorite.) Each time I played he insisted on helping me carry my equipment to the door. And then he would make a point to tell me how important I was and how much it meant to have me come there to sing. Sometimes with what seem like very little effort people just touch you. Bill touched me. I wish I had known him earlier in his life but I am so glad I got to know him. I miss my friend. My sincere sympathy to his family.

Mary Sue Wilkinson
Young at Heart Music

Mary Sue Wilkinson - June 15, 2014 at 12:46 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Bill Wise



Mary Sue Wilkinson - June 15, 2014 at 12:35 PM



“ To All of Bill's Family -- I knew all of the Wise Family over the years. At Eastern School and at Grace Church. Not only was Bill a friend, but also my Attorney. When My husband, Owen passed away in 1978, it was your Dad who helped me get through that tough period of my life. He was responsible for my future really, for he suggested I take over Owen,s job as the County Guardian. I did with fear and trepidation, but he helped me so much. Your parents were both so great, and I am sure you will all miss them both very much. Yvonne Johnson

Yvonne Johnson - May 07, 2014 at 10:38 AM



“ Kathy and family, My thoughts and prayers are with you all.. So sad to hear of your dad's passing.. I so enjoyed my time spent with him. Even though it was a short time, I felt that I got to know him very well.. Sometimes we didn't see eye to eye, I never left his house without a hug and a little grin!! He shared many stories with me about all of you and your mom!! He loved you all so.. So sorry for your loss.. Marsha Flack, caregiver from Comfort Keepers

Marsha Flack - May 04, 2014 at 03:34 PM



“ Aw

Gordon - May 03, 2014 at 04:17 PM



“ Kathy, I must tell you what wonderful support you gave your Dad in Leland during the years after Jeanne entered Cherry Hill Haven. The days you spent with him almost every week made life more bearable. Every father in the same predicament should be so fortunate! With sorrow, George Basta

George Basta - May 02, 2014 at 05:00 PM



“ Dearest Kathy, Anne, Will, and Chris,
What a grand man your father was! He was engaging, gracious, witty, and multi-talented with a great sense of humor and spirit. I always admired his love for your dear mother. They were like second parents to me.
It was such a treat for me to be able to stop in and chat with him when he moved into Traverse Manor, just down the hall from my mom's apartment. Occasionally, he'd pull himself up to the piano in the dining room and play to everyone's delight, but if you asked him to play any other time he'd politely decline and say he was shy.
He'll be greatly missed.
Love to you all,
Mary Bursian Tuttle

Mary Tuttle - April 30, 2014 at 07:45 AM