



Dr. William "Bill" Long

September 20, 1937 - August 29, 2018

On August 29, 2018, Dr. William "Bill" Long, Tallahassee's first Board Certified Peripheral Vascular Surgeon, died of complications arising from Alzheimer's disease, which Bill battled for several years with courage, true grit and the steadfast support of his wife, Maria N. Long.

Bill is survived by the love of his life, his wife, as well as his daughter Lucy Long, his son Dr. William "Will" D. Long, Jr., his daughter-in-law Amanda Long (nee Melton) and grandson Wiley Crawford Long. Bill had a unique bond with both Lucy and Will. His dedication to medicine led both Lucy and Will to seek careers in medicine. Lucy, like her mother Maria, is a Registered Nurse and Will is a physician specializing in emergency medicine. Bill was predeceased by his parents Harrell and Janie Merle Long and his brother Jerry Long.

Bill was born in Douglas, Georgia, but reared in Quitman, Georgia. While growing up in Quitman, Bill spent time working on his grandparents' dairy farm. It was there he developed his love of the South Georgia piney woods and their flora and fauna. Later in his life, that love came full circle when he acquired a farm outside Quitman, Georgia, that he named "Pineywoods," which he managed for bird hunting and fishing.

Bill graduated from Quitman High School in 1955. Despite his wiry build, he played both quarterback and linebacker on his high school football team. While in high school he learned to play tennis. Bill was a firm believer in exercise of the body as well as the mind. Accordingly, Bill jogged for exercise and stress relief, and he continued to play tennis into his adult years. He and Maria played tennis together and with friends in both Tallahassee and at Pineywoods farm, after they had a tennis court installed there. While Bill was a good tennis player, Maria excelled at the sport. Bill encouraged Maria to fully develop her tennis skills and to pursue a career as a tennis official working professional matches at the U. S. Open, Wimbledon, the Australian Open and many other professional tennis tournaments. Bill always encouraged Maria and Lucy to have self-confidence, be independent and to think for themselves.

Bill attended Emory University as an undergraduate and also earned his M.D. degree from there in 1962. Following graduation, Bill began his medical residency at Grady Hospital in Atlanta. While at Grady, he met Dr. Galt Allee who later became and remains

Tallahassee's most renowned cardiologist. Later, when both were practicing medicine in Tallahassee, the two became good friends. Dr. Allee taught Bill the fine art of both casting a fly rod and the intricacies of tying flies. Bill and Galt traveled extensively to fly fish for both fresh and salt water fish.

Bill's residency was interrupted by a tour of duty in South Korea where he served as a Captain in the U. S. Army Medical Corps. While in Korea, Bill provided medical care to U. S. servicemen and also to some Korean children suffering from a cleft palate. While in Korea, Bill was introduced to pheasant hunting. He found that he had to be much more careful hunting pheasant in Korea than hunting quail in South Georgia because in South Georgia he did not have to worry about walking into an unmarked mine field.

After returning from Korea and completing his residency requirement, Bill returned to Emory Medical School and was admitted into its newly established peripheral vascular surgery fellowship directed by Dr. Garland Perdue. Bill was Emory's first graduate in that fellowship.

Having completed the fellowship, Bill moved to Tallahassee in 1970. Initially, he practiced general surgery, but after a year, he limited his practice to peripheral vascular surgery and subsequently formed Vascular Associates of Tallahassee. In 1974 he was joined in that practice by his close friend Dr. Tom Lawhorn, also a graduate of Emory's peripheral vascular surgery fellowship. The two practiced medicine together until Bill's retirement in January 2004.

Bill was dedicated to his profession and to his patients. He was a compassionate person who would never allow the mistreatment of people or animals. Bill placed the welfare of his patients ahead of any personal agenda. Many nights he answered calls to the emergency room. On one occasion, Bill had just boarded a flight to attend a medical conference when he was alerted that a patient had suffered a stroke and was in need of his surgical skills. Bill got off the plane and rushed to the hospital to perform surgery on a clogged vessel.

When not practicing medicine, Bill enjoyed training bird dogs, hunting upland birds, ducks and clay target shooting. Bill walked many miles with his close friends, Dr. Robert "Bob" Snider and Harry Thomas Sr. hunting quail, ruffed grouse, pheasant, Hungarian partridge and sharp tail grouse in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Michigan, South Dakota, North Dakota and Montana. Bill was known for owning fine bird dogs, mostly big-going pointers with an occasional setter or drathaar added to his kennel. Bill was a founding member of the Coon Bottom Gun Club. He was an excellent shot on the skeet range, on walking sporting clays courses, and in a dove field.

Bill loved to spend time at his Pineywoods farm in South Georgia and also at Mandalay Lodge on the Aucilla River. Bill enjoyed fishing, both for bass on his farm lake, and for trout and redfish in Gulf waters off the mouth of the Aucilla River. When fishing was successful Bill enjoyed inviting friends to the farm for a fish fry. Bill would make cole slaw

using his special recipe, cut the French fries in a particular manner, and fry everything himself—even occasionally burning some of Maria’s hush puppies. Bill passed on his passion for fishing and bird dogs to his son Will who now pursues both interests with the same enthusiasm Bill exhibited.

Bill had a brilliant mind. He was organized, intellectually curious and was an avid reader on a wide range of subjects from Shakespeare to Stephen Hawking to the Dalai Lama. After Bill explained the Dalai Lama’s writing to his friends some started calling him Buddha Bill. However, that did not bother Bill, he was confident in himself and loved a good joke. He was a longtime member of a Tallahassee Book Club and enjoyed spirited discussion with club members on whatever book was under review.

Throughout his life, Bill enjoyed a wide range of music. While in Atlanta, he met members of the Kingston Trio and remained a fan of their music, particularly a song titled “Scotch and Soda.” He enjoyed classical music as well as jazz. He and Maria attended the Newport Jazz festival and locally enjoyed a jazz duo known as “Paris Match.” After retirement he loved to ride the red clay roads near his farm, enjoying a cold beer, while listening to Ian Tyson’s western ballads. Musically, Bill was a man for all seasons.

With Bill Long’s death, a light went out in the lives of his family and close friends. Bill was a man to tell the children about: an old-fashioned man who placed his integrity, his honesty, and his honor ahead of worldly temptation for easy financial or professional gain. Bill could never forsake the internal ease of a clear conscience for the eternal queasiness of a compromised character. He would not and could not be corrupted for short-term convenience or long-term gain. Principle guided his personal and professional life. To know Bill was to respect and admire a man who knew wrong from right and always chose right.

Bill Long never lost sight of life’s simplest fact—that a good name is a greater treasure than a mint of money, or empty honor, or a transient advantage. Bill could always be trusted because he insisted on what he saw as right and honest. Now, his family and those who knew Bill mourn his passing with a sense of particular loss. But, the power of his example lives on. That there are still such men like Bill Long, and that their values and kind will prevail, is the truth to tell the children about. He was a true gentleman, a man with whom honor was sacred and virtue safe.

In both his professional and personal life Bill positively touched the lives of many with whom he came in contact. In lieu of flowers, his family requests that his many friends consider a donation to a favorite charity. There will be no immediate funeral service but a celebration of Bill’s life will be held at a later date.

Breanna Green is assisting the family with their arrangements.

Comments



“ I have known Dr. Long since he came to town. I have admired him since I started working with him. I worked a lot with he and Dr. Lawhorn and later Dr. Kaelin. I have always had the utmost respect for him. He always treated us with respect also. We heard many stories about the family as the years went by. Maria, I know you, Will, and Lucy will miss him greatly. So sorry for your loss. I will continue to pray for your comfort.

Gina Whitfield - September 19, 2018 at 02:29 PM



“ I have many memories of Dr. Long both personally and professionally whom I worked for for 20 years. His generosity in allowing my family to spend time at the farm fishing, playing tennis, and just enjoying that beautiful property has left us with lifelong precious memories. May God comfort you in your loss. Love, Debbie Waters

Debbie Waters - September 06, 2018 at 10:36 AM



“ Bill once told me "never brag until the last dog is in the truck". Well Bill, the last dog is in the truck and yours was a life well lived.
Bill Price

Bill Price - September 06, 2018 at 06:53 AM



“ Dear Maria. To you and your family, my deepest sympathy for your loss. It is my loss also. I learned so much from Bill, especially one lesson that a lot of people could use- how to disagree without being disagreeable! He turned me on to some great books, too. You took wonderful care of him; I was always impressed with the rapport between you two. Thanks for sharing him with the world. Much love, Claire

Claire Kelly - September 05, 2018 at 01:41 PM



“ That was a lovely obituary for a lovely man. I admired him as a physician and a person. We were all lucky to have known him.

Sam Moorer - September 05, 2018 at 12:34 PM