



## William Crofton Prescott

April 13, 1953 - October 2, 2022

William “Bill” Crofton Prescott was born April 13, 1953, to parents Jacquelin Inabinet and James R. Prescott in West Palm Beach, Florida. The youngest of three children, Bill showed an early interest in encyclopedias, model airplanes and photography. Bill attended Leon High School in Tallahassee and always told his wife, Pat, that it was love at first sight for him when he noticed her in its hallways. He graduated in 1971.

Bill and Pat were introduced February 5, 1979, in the newsroom of the Tallahassee Democrat, where Bill had started five years before in the wire room. Pat, a new hire, immediately suspected the tall, blond feature writer was special. Bill was unassuming, contemplative and worldly in his own way. He read Shakespeare and Milton. Behind his shaggy hair, red beard and easygoing nature was a man who was both meticulous and professional. He expressed interest in Pat but did not try to stake any claim on her, which she liked.

Pat liked everything she saw about Bill, especially his distinctive, mellow voice. He reminded her of Jack Prescott, the long-haired paleo-anthropology professor played by Jeff Bridges in “King Kong.” But Bill was dating a high school classmate of hers, and she respected that. Bill noticed that Pat, who walked to work, sometimes skipped lunch. One day, he left a tangerine from his own lunch with a note on her desk. He didn’t want her to go hungry. As the

weeks went by, the tangerines continued to arrive, along with shy glances from across the newsroom. The supervising news clerk observed all this and said to Pat, "I think he likes you." One of Pat's duties was placing mail in the reporters' cubbyholes at the front of the newsroom. Because Pat was a nut, she wrote a note and placed it with Bill's mail. "Fan mail from a flounder."

Bill loved it. Bill and Pat were married in 1984 at Andrews Memorial Chapel in Dunedin, Florida, where they established long-term roots.

Bill was a newsman to his core, but he had worked at other jobs. There was a stint at a pinball arcade, and delivery of surgical supplies. He left the Democrat's wire room for a time to work on a tugboat out of Panacea, but soon returned in his new position as reporter. He worked for small and large papers, reporting, editing and taking his own photos. Bill especially enjoyed taking photos of pigs at the various Georgia fairs. He covered county and city governments, rattlesnake roundups, concerts, theater, trials and Scientology. At times he was a desk editor, assistant city editor, and copy editor. He spent 25 years at The Tampa Tribune, working as an assistant bureau chief for its Pinellas edition, on its state desk, zoned editions and feature sections. His laugh could fill the newsroom. Some there noted more than a hint of "The Dude" from "The Big Lebowski" in his laidback nature. Several referred to him as "The Bison" for his hairstyle. At various times, Bill wrote for The Thomasville Times-Enterprise, The Valdosta Daily Times and The Clearwater Sun. For several years he ran The Current, an online news division of Lobby Tools, a Florida legislative information service. He also edited for Florida Politics and Khaas Baat, a Tampa publication serving Indian Americans in Florida.

Bill was a fast learner and never stopped picking up new skills and interests. Once, after covering a circus, he returned to the newsroom with a set of juggling balls and learned to juggle. His extensive knowledge included

architecture, wine and foreign films. He took a beekeeping course, learned to make his own beer, built a (mostly 1963) Volvo PV544 from spare parts and traveled England several times on his own.

Naming the interests Bill did not have would be easier than naming those he did. He loved reading, working on his cars and cooking, especially chicken cacciatore, and treasured his ancient cast-iron skillets. He enjoyed eating most anything and sampling Asian and Indian cuisine. When traveling, he would seek out a city's best spots to discover what the most authentic restaurants were serving. In the words of his wife, Pat, "Bill always met the most fascinating people, and then learned from them."

Bill attended Eckerd College's Program for Experienced Learners (PEL) beginning in 1993 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities in May 2011. He thrived in the classroom and received the Irving G. Foster Award for "excellence in overall academic achievement" with the support of his Eckerd mentor, Dr. Catherine Griggs. Bill took the time to pay it forward when it came to his education and career and the skills he had learned through both. He mentored younger journalists and went out of his way to teach those inside and outside the newsroom. As a journalist, Bill never really retired from his work and was always curious—researching, writing and editing for himself and others.

Outside of work, Bill and Pat enjoyed a marriage that celebrated each other's creativity and artistic spirit. Bill encouraged Pat to be a nonconformist and would often gift her with art books and supplies. He built cabinets for her to decorate. Beginning with their first year of dating and continuing throughout their marriage, he would make Pat an Easter basket, and took time to commemorate his wife's favorite holiday by bringing Halloween decorations home for her. As a fifth-generation Floridian, Bill showed Pat, who he called

his “Marylander,” what the Sunshine State was all about. Their honeymoon included a tour of state parks and historic hotels, treks through Bill’s boyhood haunt of Highlands Hammock near Sebring, and stories that only a self-described Cracker such as Bill could tell. Bill and Pat’s homes in Dunedin and Tallahassee revolved around their wire fox terriers and cat. Wires Zephyr, Gimlet, Nigel, Sammy, Chase Manhattan and Oliver and large black cat, Joe, brought joy and devilry to their lives and inspired artwork and stories.

Bill died of natural causes at the age of 69 on October 2, 2022, at his home in Tallahassee. He is survived by his wife, Pat, and wire fox terrier, Oliver; a brother, Jim Prescott, and sister-in-law, Joanie; sister Ann Burdett, all of Tallahassee; sister-in-law Ann Burkly (Mike) in Kennesaw, Ga.; stepsister Ruth Moore (Jeff), and stepbrother Mike Moss (Andrea) all of Orlando; many cousins; and several nieces and nephews. Bill’s group of close friends, kindred souls he enjoyed for decades and considered family, also survive him.

Bill carried with him at all times a heart for helping people, an attention to detail, and a lifelong curiosity. His family plans a celebration of life, with details to be announced at a later date. Todd Wahlquist with Bevis Funeral Home, (850-385-2193, [www.bevisfh.com](http://www.bevisfh.com)) is assisting the family with their arrangements.

Pat loves Bill beyond all measure.

# Tribute Wall



“ 4 files added to the album *Bill*



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**Pat Kane** - December 08, 2022 at 04:11 PM

CM

“ So sad to hear of Bill's passing. He was my first bureau chief/editor at *The Tampa Tribune* and I'll always remember him for his laid-back style and steady, calming influence amid an often hectic newsroom. My condolences to Pat and the Prescott family.

*Carlos Moncada*

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**Carlos Moncada** - November 06, 2022 at 04:48 PM

GS

“ Pat,  
My deepest condolences to you and your family. It was a privilege and a delight to have known Bill.  
*Gary Sprott*

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**Gary Sprott** - October 24, 2022 at 11:48 AM

PK

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Pat Kane-Prescott - October 20, 2022 at 02:24 PM

PK

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



Pat Kane-Prescott - October 20, 2022 at 01:58 PM



“ One of my oddest and dearest friends, Bill was always up for sharing concerts, meals, beers and mutual insults. Sympathies and condolences to Pat and the family. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Jeff Jeter - October 04, 2022 at 06:40 PM

FB

My sincerest condolences...

Frederick B. Bellet - October 23, 2022 at 11:55 AM

KI

What a beautifully written tribute to Bill. He will be missed. Sending love and light to you Pat.

Kristen Ingle - October 23, 2022 at 01:44 PM