



William E. "Bill" Cosgrove

January 29, 1939 - July 5, 2019

Books, tennis courts, and origami paper everywhere lost a dear friend in Bill, 80, who died unexpectedly and peacefully at his home on Friday, July 5.

Bill was born January 29, 1939, raised in South St. Paul, MN, and educated at St. Augustine Grade School, Cretin High School and St. Thomas College in St. Paul and Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI. In 1970, Bill began a 36-year career at North Dakota State University in Fargo, ND, as a Professor of English, specializing in realistic and modern American literature, Black literature, William Faulkner and Mark Twain. He earned his Ph.D. in 1972 from the University of Iowa and served two terms as chair of the NDSU English Department. He was a passionate and captivating professor, beloved by his students, many of whom maintained contact with him over the years.

Bill was an active member of the Fargo community for over 40 years. His commentaries and reviews of Little Country Theater and Fargo-Moorhead Community Theater plays were featured regularly on KDSU-FM92 and in the High Plains Reader. He was a long-time Mark Twain impersonator in his original one-man show "An Evening with Mark Twain: The Trouble Begins at Eight," performing throughout North Dakota in education programs for people of all ages and as the featured entertainment in dinner theaters.

Throughout his life, Bill thoroughly enjoyed engaging in conversation on any

topic. He especially liked talking with young people about their academic pursuits and dreams. He was a dedicated father and grandfather, lifelong reader, writer and learner, year-round bicyclist, nationally ranked tennis player, avid tomato grower and origami-maker, and insistent do-it-yourselfer and fixer-upper.

After his retirement in 2006, Bill and his wife, Peggy, moved to the Minneapolis area to be closer to family. Bill continued his love of teaching by conducting origami workshops for youth as “Professor Origami” and quite often made flapping birds for anyone who needed a smile. He enjoyed spending his days caring for his daughter Cristin’s dog, Zailey, reading and writing poetry, fiction and non-fiction, and making notes on what to write next. He published his memoir Sligo Town to South Saint Paul in 2016, followed by two books, May the Road Rise to Meet You and Imagining Magic. He was working on his third book at the time of his death.

Bill is preceded in death by his parents and two sisters, and survived by his wife of 53 years, Peggy; daughters Courtney (Jim) Reed, Shannon (Eric) Cosgrove-Rucker and Cristin Cosgrove; grandchildren Fiona, Ebenezer, Bright, Kate, Marcus and Julia; and many other relatives.

Visitation is Saturday 1 PM at Washburn-McReavy, 5000 W. 50th & Hwy 100, Edina, MN, followed by Memorial 2 PM and reception. Funeral home (952) 920-3996.

No flowers please. Donations may be made to the Bill Cosgrove TennisWorks Scholarship Fund at the Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center to engage under-represented youth in the sport of tennis: www.fwtec.org/donations or 100 Federal Drive, St Paul, MN 55111.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 13. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Edina Chapel
5000 West 50th & Highway 100
Edina, MN 55436
(952) 920-3996
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Chapel Service

JUL 13. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Edina Chapel
5000 West 50th & Highway 100
Edina, MN 55436
(952) 920-3996
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Tribute Wall

SB

“ *To Cristin and family: We are so sorry for your loss, and have been thinking of you frequently during this difficult time. Wishing you peace and connection as you remember Bill together. Sam B. (Co-worker of Cristin @ Optum.)*

Sam Brisson - July 17, 2019 at 10:33 AM

AT

“ *I was teaching with the NDSU Department of English in Fargo during Bill's tenure as department head. He was kind, gracious, and very good at guiding the department during my time there. I also was around when he "arranged" the visits of one writer by the name Samuel Clemens. At department picnics he often lead the singing of "Oh, Danny Boy" accompanied by other members of the department who had Irish ancestry. Very sad to hear of his passing. Apologies for this being late. ---Andy Trump, Brookings, SD*

Andy Trump - July 15, 2019 at 03:50 PM

MR

“ *When Bill came to the twin cities after retirement he called me and asked if I (cousin Mary Cosgrove Ricker) could hook him up with some tennis players at Lillydale Tennis club. I contacted our dear friend Bill Hocking who took Bill under his wing . Two great Bill's & it all became history. A long and I have heard fun years of guys getting together enjoying the amazing sport of tennis.*

mary ricker - July 10, 2019 at 08:46 PM

SL

“ Bill was my professor in graduate school. My favorite professor to be exact. His students would confuse him with the authors we were studying. He became Twain, Faulkner or Wright. His slides took us to the settings where novels were born. What an inspirational persona he possessed. I am sure he will be missed by many.

Sheila Lacy - July 10, 2019 at 06:45 PM



“ My husband and I have memories of Bill as a professor at NDSU. My husband's memory is of a particular paper he wrote as an undergraduate and Dr. Cosgrove's encouraging response. (For an engineering major, memorable comments on writing where amazing!) I met Dr Cosgrove as a graduate student in his William Faulkner course. Wowzers--terrific discussions. I went on to earn a Ph.D. in English. Facebook kept is connected in recent years. We had tickets to the Guthrie that we shared with Bill and his wife when we were unable to attend. It was still in the bucket--dinner at Old Spaghetti Factory and another play. We ran out of time. Our sympathy to Bill's family. He loved each of you dearly. Karla Smart-Morstad and David Morstad

Karla Smart-Morstad - July 10, 2019 at 06:10 PM