



William Alan Hodder

May 6, 1931 - July 6, 2023

Hodder, William Alan CEO, community leader, father & friend died peacefully July 6th with his children by his side and family, friends & Golden, Banjo 3, in his heart. A man of exceptional intelligence, integrity, compassion & drive, Bill lived a remarkable life, demonstrating his values of hard work, education, excellence, loyalty & love daily for 92 years. Born in Lincoln, NE, to Velma & E.C. Hodder early in the Depression. As a single parent, Velma took graduate courses in education, becoming a teacher, principal & then superintendent to support Bill & his siblings, Don & Cathy. It was in this crucible that Bill's character formed: the steadfast love of his mother, relatives & community sustained him; loyal friends added joy & adventure; education, hard work, tenacity & excellence created opportunity. Bill worked as a paper boy & farmhand, and built bridges to cover U of Nebraska tuition. The President of his Phi Delt chapter, Bill fell in love with the Theta who lit up every room, Sue Holmes. After he earned his B.S. in Business Administration in 1954, they married & started a family. Following 2 years in the Army, Bill joined IBM & achieved 100 Percent Club membership annually. IBM sponsored Bill to attend Harvard's Program for Management Development in 1959-60 & he rose rapidly through the ranks. To stay in MN, Bill left IBM & joined Dayton's in 1966; thriving there, he served as President of Target Stores 1968-73. Bill joined the Donaldson Company Board of Directors in 1969, and was offered the role of President in 1973. Under Bill's leadership (CEO '81-96; Chairman '84-96), this industrial air filtration company entered many major growth

markets & expanded internationally; during his tenure, sales increased 18 times to over \$750 million. His commitment to building shareholder value transformed Donaldson, setting it up to thrive in the 21st century. A firm believer in the people of Donaldson, Bill steadfastly retained his DCI-heavy portfolio throughout his life. Bill's impact on the community was similarly significant. Expert in executive compensation & corporate governance, he served for decades on corporate boards, including Wells Fargo, ReliaStar, SuperValu, Cowles Media, Tennant & Frandzen Bank. He led the MN Business Partnership as President & Chairman. He led United Way campaigns, served on Minnesota Orchestra, Macalester & U of Nebraska boards, and helped the Carlson School form their Board of Overseers. Chairing that board for 6 years, he linked the school closely to the Twin Cities business community. In recognition of his "energy, discipline, unstoppable commitment to excellence, hard work and strategic vision," Bill was awarded the U of M Regents Award in 1996. Sri Zaheer, Carlson School Dean noted, "What a giant of a man and a gem he was! His mind was so sharp, and his curiosity about the world was an inspiration!" A 53-year YPO'er, he delighted in his Forum & every chance to learn new things. Bill's life was far from all work & no play; he pursued his extra-curricular passions with characteristic drive. He adored his wife, 5 children, and grandchildren, skiing, rafting & traveling with them, attending their games & performances, and especially treasuring time together at his beloved "Sites 1 & 3" in northern MN, sailing, pontooning at sunset, & building all kinds of structures. A fitness fanatic, he jogged daily beginning in '65. He always had a dog & was especially fond of his 5 Springers (1 named Target) and 4 Goldens (3 named Banjo). He loved vehicles; Suburbans, a vintage red jeep, & a tracked skid-steer loader were his favorites. He adored lifelong & new friends, relishing tennis & horseshoe matches, skiing out West, & hosting the annual Symposium (of his kindergarten friends), where success was measured by the cleverness of the jokes, hands of pitch played, & cans of beer stacked on the tennis court railing. He read voraciously: 3 newspapers, countless magazines, paperbacks

& websites (on his trusty iPad) & had an all-consuming interest in consumer product research. He clipped & copied articles religiously, sharing them with friends, colleagues, children & grandchildren, each stack tailored to the recipient's interests. He & Sue loved entertaining, hosting legendary dinner parties, 4th of July potlucks, & themed Minikahda & Mpls Club soirees. He loved craft beer in a frosty mug, best savored while watching his beloved 'Huskers. Bill had a playful sense of humor (which even he found quite amusing), creating nicknames, telling jokes & sharing stories of youthful misadventures. He was humble, famously frugal (a 49-cent rebate found in his wallet), thorough ("tis not the fool who asks"), sweet & generous with family, friends and especially in supporting education & medical research. Bill died of complications of an aggressive cancer, discovered 2 weeks before his passing. He is preceded in death by his parents, wife of 57 years, Suzanne H. Hodder; daughter, Susan C. Hodder; & brother, Don Hodder. He will be greatly missed by his children, Kent (Judy) Hodder, Laurie (Ed) Greeno, Mark (Serene) Hodder, Beth (Michael) Whitcomb; grandchildren & step-grandchildren: Abby, Alan, Annie, Bobby, Christopher, Drew, Jonathan, Lexi, Maya, Mike, Nick, Will; sister, Cathy (Bob) Serr; half- brother Jim (Barbara) Hodder; in-laws, Sally & Jack Campbell; nieces & nephews, countless friends & dearest confidante. A celebration of Bill's life will be held Thursday, August 31st, at 3:30 PM at The Minikahda Club, with brief program @ 4:30. In lieu of flowers, memorials preferred to The Hodder Undergraduate Scholarship z.umn.edu/... at the University of MN Foundation, PO Box 850266, Mpls, MN 55486. PS: Dad, no doubt you're chagrined by the length of this notice & its associated expense. You are, however, a remarkable man with an amazing story that begs to be told...and we've barely scratched the surface. This one's on us.

Cemetery Details

Lakewood Cemetery (Minneapolis)

3600 Hennepin Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55408

Tribute Wall



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of William Alan Hodder.*



July 21, 2023 at 10:25 AM



“ *As a neighbor and newer friend of Bill's, I feel privileged to have been able to know him and Sue. Bill invited me over for a history lesson and “adult beverage” recently and I was amazed at his memory and passion for Pelican Lake. Many of us have benefited from his stewards of this special area.*

Jeff Smith

Jeff Smith - July 19, 2023 at 11:52 PM



“ *Bill and I and our families have been lake cabin friends and neighbors since 1964. I have admired him and his dedication to the environment and have watched him advance in the business world from the early days with Bruce Dayton up the ladder of promise to Donaldson.*

I am pleased and thankful for having had an association with Bill in my life.

Bob Zweigle

Bob Zweigle - July 12, 2023 at 10:26 AM

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Bill is one of my oldest and best friends. Starting on Sewell St. in Lincoln, Nebr. through the U of N. His career with IBM was outstanding., We had many great days Skiing together with Jerry Desmond,. Steve Carveth,et.al.He had a wonderful wife Sue and family and will be greatly missed.

*Bob Howey
Centennial, Colorado*

Bob - July 18, 2023 at 01:12 PM