



## William Roger McGrann

October 23, 1937 - January 19, 2024

William Roger McGrann, born October 23rd, 1937 to Josephine and William McGrann, was by any criteria a force of nature.

While growing up in Owatonna, Bill relished playing baseball and otherwise testing his limits, two traditions he continued throughout his youth. And while a proud alumnus of Owatonna High School and a Distinguished Military Graduate of St. John's University, it must be noted that his most prized educational accomplishment was defeating the Big Ten champion Minnesota Gophers 9-7 in what St. John's baseball termed 1959's "Great Event." This athletic prowess led to him being recruited by the Chicago White Sox, yet Bill was - and always remained - a lifelong Twins fan.

After college, Bill chose to serve his country, first completing Basic Infantry Officer and Ranger training at Fort Benning, followed by Counter-Intelligence Officer instruction at Fort Holabird as a Second Lieutenant. He then worked as a First Lieutenant in the U.S Army Research Group commanding a 15-man unit of the Counter-Intelligence Corps, and later was promoted to Captain in the U.S. Army Reserve. Yet never one to wait for orders, Bill chose to continue his education at the University of Minnesota where he received his law degree, as well as met the love of his life and wife of nearly 60 years, Judith.

Together, they relocated to Washington D.C. where Bill worked as a Special

Agent with the National Security Agency, and later served as a Special Representative of the Secretary of Defense in Vietnam. And while Bill was awarded the Outstanding U.S. Civilian Performance Award, he was always most proud of getting reprimanded for his wife joining him in a war zone and trading his office air conditioner for an armored personnel carrier to help confront the Tet Offensive.

In determining that he had made his contribution overseas, Bill returned to the States where he applied his foreign combat experience to domestic political service. This included working on the staff of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, while simultaneously earning a master's degree from George Washington University. Most meaningful to Bill, however, was his work as Special Assistant to Senator Hubert H. Humphrey and other roles supporting the Democratic Farmer Labor Party. He then continued to champion Minnesota working on legislative and governmental relations as a lawyer in the private sector, first with O'Connor and Hannan and later as a founding partner of McGrann Shea Carnival Straughn & Lamb. Bill took great pride in his professional contributions to the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, the Minneapolis Convention Center, the Guthrie Theatre, the Itasca Project, and many other endeavors that made his city such a great place to live - part of the reason he was selected by the Journal of Law in Politics as one of the outstanding lawyers in Minnesota and appointed as Honorary Consul to the United Kingdom.

While Bill treasured his professional achievements, family was closest to his heart. He and Judith enjoyed traveling the globe, the simple pleasure of a walk around the lake, and arguing over who was the better gardener. A loving father to Christopher, Meghan, and Patrick, he was always quick with an adventure and a nickname to match. And so it was that "Fonzie," "Babes," and "Biggie" joined "Jude" and "Poopopski" on camping misadventures, quixotic road trips, and often just cruising around town in Bill's vintage VW bug.

Thankfully, this close-knit dynamic only increased over time, with the family growing along with the fun. He warmly welcomed daughter-in-law, Sharon McGrann, and son-in-law, Chris Lawrence, into the clan and cherished grandchildren Mollie, Abbie and Kate McGrann and Sullivan and Murphy Lawrence. The team was rounded out by Bill's best pal, Ava the corgi. Together they all enjoyed so much: St. Patrick's Day parades, bike rides in Key West, and sharing lively meals to name but a few. Yet Bill especially savored sharing the world with his grandchildren, be it exploring Parisian nightlife and Guatemalan craft markets, to following the Twins on the road, camping with pandas, and cheering on Irish rugby back in the homeland. And while the rest of family tried their best, Bill was always the undisputed star of the Thanksgiving Fashion Show.

This overwhelming love continued up to and beyond Bill's dementia diagnosis, which in many ways only made the family stronger. He lived his final years on the North Shore, watching the waves crash in with son Patrick, who had the privilege of accompanying him as primary caregiver until his passing on January 19th.

At the start of his life, Bill McGrann wasn't given much. But he was never one to complain as he followed his own unique path, doing his absolute best to create a lasting legacy for his country, his city, and those he loved dearly. And he will be sorely, sorely missed.

"Good show, Dad. Good show!"

A celebration of life will be held May 22nd at 4pm in the Dowling Studio at the Guthrie Theater, with a reception to follow. And while the Guthrie isn't set up to accept flowers, his family suggests planting them instead.

# Tribute Wall

PS

“ Peter S. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William Roger McGrann.

Peter S. - May 27, 2024 at 08:20 PM

BM

“ BOMA Greater Minneapolis Members purchased the Gracious Lavender Basket for the family of William Roger McGrann.



BOMA Greater Minneapolis Members - May 22, 2024 at 03:56 PM

BM

“ BOMA Greater Minneapolis Members planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William Roger McGrann.

BOMA Greater Minneapolis Members - May 22, 2024 at 03:56 PM