



Allison Masterson

March 29, 1928 - April 15, 2021

Allison Mayhew (Bill) Masterson: The Man, the Myth, the Legend...

Allison Mayhew (aka Bill) Masterson bounced back from surgery to repair his heart (2000), his carotid artery (2006), an abdominal aneurysm (2007), and a popliteal artery aneurysm (2019); but he could not beat spindle cell carcinoma, a rare form of lung cancer. Bill died in Altamonte Springs, Florida on April 15, 2021.

Born at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington D.C. on March 29, 1928, to Dorothy Mayhew Masterson and Alvin McKinley Masterson, Bill had an older sister, Adeline (Ocala, FL), who predeceased him.

An “army brat” Bill lived many places, including Augsburg, Germany after WWII when his father was reassigned from supporting the OSS to the Army Occupation Forces. After returning to the U.S and completing high school, Bill spent two years in the Army and was wounded during the Korean War.

Bill used the GI Bill to earn a B.S. Degree from the University of Florida and a Master’s Degree from Rollins College, taught high school history, and served as a vocational rehabilitation counselor and administrator before joining the staff of Seminole Community College as a counselor and later as Director of Student Life, a position he held until he retired. Bill ended his career as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Texas-Austin and at Huston-Tillotson University, also in Austin.

Along the way, Bill raised two children, Bill Jr. (Je'nee) and Michelle (Steve); survived 40 years of marriage to Maggie; was the proud grandfather of Allison Michelle (now a graduate student at UNC - Chapel Hill); and doted on his nieces and nephews who, according to him, were “as important to me as my own children.” Bill also became addicted to golf—and still was perfecting his swing and practicing his putting a few months before he died.

Unlike many of his generation, Bill received the gift of time and used that gift wisely. He sailed on every one of the seven seas, logged over 650,000 miles in a variety of planes from modern jets to six passenger crates, and traveled to 50 states, 60 countries, and 6 continents (including Antarctica). He toured the Canary Islands on a camel, canoed down wild rivers in Costa Rica and Guatemala, climbed an active volcano in Chile and the Grand Tetons in Jackson Hole, drove the Pan American Highway through the Andes in a snowstorm, hiked all five of the D-Day beaches, served (against his better judgment) as a human shield for a British officer in Northern Ireland during “The Troubles,” sailed around Cape Horn, panned for gold in the Klondike, outsmarted three bears in Banff, and got invited to an Australia Day barbeque on the beach in Melbourne—even though he arrived 24 hours earlier knowing no one in the city. The list could go on and on. Suffice to say that Bill Masterson loved adventure, never met a stranger, and managed to fit in wherever he went.

Bill found another type of adventure when he spent two weeks each summer in Scituate, MA teaching his nieces and nephews –and eventually his granddaughter—how to fly kites, golf, swim, and enjoy life, all the while trying to impart valuable “life lessons.” He served as the family’s unofficial “fixer:” repairing any and all items (toys, furniture, windows) broken by accident, arbitrating disagreements, and asking everyone the essential question: are you a happy girl (or boy)? Between visits, Uncle Bill was available 24/7 via phone to listen and offer advice—and that phone was busy, especially after his nieces and nephews entered college.

When Bill was first diagnosed, several people asked him how he wanted to spend his remaining days. His answer surprised them: “I never had a bucket list. My goal was to enjoy each day, do what appealed to me (as long as my actions did not harm anyone else), treat others with kindness and respect, and live a good life by my definition. I have no regrets and thousands of happy memories. I had a great life. Because what matters in the end are the people you meet along the way, the good you do, the adventures you share, and the happy memories you create with family and friends.”

Interment will be at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery on Thursday, April 22, at 11 a.m. Services will be private.

Since Cape Canaveral National Cemetery does not allow flowers to remain on the grave and family members have their memories of life with Bill Masterson to console them, resist the temptation to send flowers. Instead, consider a donation in Allison M (Bill) Masterson’s name to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida (411 Mercy Drive, Orlando, FL 32805) or St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis TN (262 Danny Thomas

Place, Memphis, TN 38105).

The Family of Bill Masterson invites you to leave a message of condolence on the Tribute Wall created in his loving memory.

Cemetery

Cape Canaveral National Cemetery

5525 US-1 North

Mims, FL, 32754

Comments



“ Comments at the Graveside Memorial Offered by Bill Masterson's Wife

We are laying a unique and wonderful man to rest here today. Except for me, everyone present has known Bill Masterson since they were born, so I am not going to talk about his family, his accomplishments, his military service, or where he went to college. Instead, I would like to focus on who he was—and address my remarks directly to Bill.

Many times (in jest, I am sure) you told people that, although we have been together for 40 + years, you sometimes wonder what I see in you. As you know, I am a world-class shopper—and I can honestly say I could have shopped forever and never found a better husband and companion than you. Here are the top ten reasons why.

1. You are one of the kindest, most honorable men I ever met. (And yes, I put “one of” just to keep you on your toes).
2. You brought out the best in me (at least 90% of the time...we won't talk about the other 10%).
3. You helped me become a better person by identifying occasional flaws in my character, and then supporting my efforts to eliminate them. (Please note I said “occasional.”)
4. You gave a risk-averse person the courage and support required to get a doctorate, change jobs, move to another state, stand up for ideas she believed in, write a book, and _____ (fill in the blanks).
5. You were my friend before you were my husband, and you stayed my friend after we married. (As our grandniece Margaret would say, “The best buy one, get one free deal ever.”)
6. You had my back for 40 + years and always told me the truth as you saw it—even if the truth royally annoyed me.
7. You celebrated every day and filled each one with as many adventures as possible. Most couples have a half dozen “magical moments” in a lifetime. We had that many in a week.
8. You loved to travel. You loved to laugh. You never met a stranger—and you treated everyone you met with dignity and respect whether that person was a university president or a member of the custodial staff.
9. You watched out for me even when I believed the watching was unnecessary. You will forever be the little voice in my ear telling me to “be careful,” “be happy,” “don't spend too much time worrying about things that may never happen,” and “slow down, you're moving too fast.”
10. You convinced me I was braver, stronger, and smarter than I thought I was. You

were truly one-of-a-kind. Of all the gifts I have received in my life, you are the one I treasure most.

P.S. Right now, I know three things for sure: (a) Life will never be the same for any of us. (b) You will never be forgotten by the hundreds (if not thousands) of people whose lives you positively influenced. (c) I do not know how I will manage without you, but I will do my best because to do less would not be worthy of you or the 40+ years we spent together.

I also want you to know I found the note you left for me. I can assure you that I will resist the urge to enter a nunnery or to jump in the casket with you today; but I will be along eventually. Until then, rest in peace, my friend. You lived a life that mattered and a made a difference to many, many people.

Marguerite M. Masterson - April 24 at 09:33 AM



“ Shakespeare once said, “The evil men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones.” I honestly cannot think of any evil Bill Masterson did during his life, but I do remember many of the good things he did.

- Awards: Bill received awards from Vocational Rehabilitation in recognition of his success in working with people with disabilities and helping them live fuller, more meaningful lives. Seminole Community College recognized Bill for pioneering the creation of a Student Governance Association (think shared governance) in place of a Student Government Association. The “You Are Our Hero” award he received from SCC students occupies a prominent place on his trophy wall.

- Good Deeds: These are too numerous to count, but here are a few examples. (1) I have a severely disabled sister. For years, Bill served as her “teacher.” He brought her workbooks, assigned pages for her to do, corrected each page, and gave her stickers for good work. (2) Bill volunteered to mentor first-generation-in-college and at-risk students at the University of Texas-Austin and at Houston-Tillotson University. (3) After he retired, Bill volunteered to teach study and life management skills at Central Florida high schools. (4) Bill took over household chores so his wife could complete a residency in Miami and earn her doctorate. (5) On our first trip to Europe in 1982, our traveling companions were complaining about an elderly woman from New York who was always making us late. Bill said he would take care of it, and he did. How? He simply knocked on her door every morning and told her we would pick her up in 30 minutes for breakfast. She was never late again. (6) On a trip to Vienna, we went to see the Lipizzan horses perform. We had lovely box seats, but the elderly couple behind us had purchased standing room only tickets. Bill gave them our seats.

- Inspiring Others: Bill practiced what he preached. He treated everyone with respect, still opened doors for women, always let cars merge into his lane, and lived by the saying “always the gentleman.” For many years, he was an inveterate letter writer offering advice on a variety of topics, sharing his world view, and outlining principles to live by.

- Riding to the Rescue: If friends or family members needed a ride in the middle of the night because their car (or date) had broken down, Bill was there. If someone needed a few dollars to tide them over until payday, Bill wrote a check. If a friend or family member needed help (even though they might not admit they needed it) he would be on the next plane to Boston, Washington, New York, or wherever. If someone broke a window, a favorite toy, or a knick-knack, Bill would do his best to repair or replace it.

- Speaking Out: Bill never hesitated to call out petty, mean, ignorant, or arrogant people. He despised bullies and anyone who enabled them. I will not name names. Suffice to say, people who exhibited these behaviors either modified their conduct or exited Bill’s world.



“ One summer we rented a rustic cabin on the Athabasca River outside Banff. Our first night, Bill decided we had to take a walk after dinner along the river. I was a bit hesitant: it was getting dark, the cabin was fairly isolated, and I was positive I had seen some droppings from fairly large animals on the trail. Of course, Bill prevailed.

For the first five or six minutes, the walk wasn't bad; but then I started to hear sounds in the bushes. Bill told me I was imagining things, and I almost believed him until I turned around and saw a black bear behind us. As I grabbed Bill's arm, another bear appeared, then three more. Thinking quickly, Bill shoved me over the river bank and under the exposed root system of a huge tree. He then jumped down placing himself between me and the bears.

We had a tense few minutes until the bears ambled off. As we scrambled up the embankment, an exhilarated Bill kept saying, "Wasn't that an amazing experience?" My response: "Run, the bears could come back any minute." As we ran, Bill kept trying to minimize the danger: the bears were small, there really were only two, and Canadian bears probably were harmless. Even after we were safely in the cabin, he continued to insist there was only one small bear (maybe two). He might have convinced me if, at that moment, the faces of several large black bears had not appeared at our kitchen window, a good 6-8 feet from the ground. Bill never mentioned the bears again.

This, of course, was not an isolated experience. A white-knuckle drive up the Rocky Mountains to get to the continental divide; climbing a volcano in Chile that we thought was dead, only it wasn't; getting lost in the winding caves in the Badlands in South Dakota; navigating part of the Canary Islands on a camel with an attitude; going through two hurricanes in a ship at sea (one in the U.S. and one between New Zealand and Australia); or underestimating the time it would take to finish our descent of the Grand Tetons in Wyoming and hiking the last few miles by moonlight are only a few examples of what it was like to travel with the man. But Bill always got me home in one piece, albeit with a few more strands of silver in my hair. He definitely was one of a kind.

Maggie (aka Aunt Marg)

Marguerite Culp - April 20 at 10:43 PM



“ Always an adventure with UB(Uncle Bill). I recall a simple outing that involved Meghan panicking when heading for a day trip with you when UB announced he had no idea where you all were. He handed Meghan a map, and taught her how to find out where you all were. Always teaching life lessons to Matt, Maura, and Meghan. Lessons well learned.

Martha McCarthy (sister-in- law)

Martha McCarthy - April 21 at 06:00 AM



“ 11 files added to the album Memories Album



Meghan Hudson - April 20 at 01:36 PM



“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



Maura McCarthy - April 19 at 01:03 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Cliff McGann - April 19 at 09:35 AM



“ 9 files added to the album Memories Album



Martha McCarthy - April 19 at 07:41 AM



“ 12 files added to the album Memories Album



Maura - April 18 at 09:08 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



maggieculp - April 18 at 06:16 PM



“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



Martha McCarthy - April 18 at 09:39 AM



“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



maggieculp - April 18 at 08:22 AM



“ 14 files added to the album Memories Album



maggieculp - April 18 at 07:40 AM



“ No description needed to see all the love, smiles and everlasting memories these photos captured...



Matthew - April 18 at 01:34 AM



“ 3 files added to the album Memories Album



maggieculp - April 17 at 11:36 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



maggieculp - April 17 at 08:43 PM



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maggieculp - April 17 at 06:19 PM



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maggieculp - April 17 at 06:16 PM



“ 4 files added to the album Memories Album



maggieculp - April 17 at 06:15 PM



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maggieculp - April 17 at 06:13 PM



“ 25 files added to the album Memories Album



maggieculp - April 17 at 05:44 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



maggieculp - April 17 at 03:28 PM



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maggieculp - April 17 at 03:27 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



maggieculp - April 17 at 03:26 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



maggieculp - April 17 at 03:25 PM



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maggieculp - April 17 at 10:32 AM



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DeGusipe Funeral Home & Crematory - April 17 at 10:02 AM