



## William Chalker Lee, Sr.

May 15, 1933 - July 5, 2016

On July 5th, Central Florida has lost one of its most colorful personalities, dedicated community volunteer and devoted father and friend. Dr. William (“Bill”) C. Lee died at his home peacefully at the age of 83 surrounded by the family and friends who loved him dearly. He will be remembered for the love and devotion he had for his family, his unquestioned honesty and integrity, the loyalty he maintained for his friends, and the impact he had on the lives of all who knew him.

Bill, as he was known to everyone who knew him, was born in Ocala, Florida on May 15th, 1933 to Robert and Edna Lee. He grew up in Deland, Florida and often described his childhood as “idyllic” surrounded by loving parents, extended family members, ever present dogs, which he loved and constantly overfed, and people who would become his lifelong friends. Even as a child, he was the life of the party with his jokes, quick wit, musical abilities and various stories of adventure. At the 1933 World’s Fair in Chicago, his mother entered him in a “Most Beautiful Baby” contest, which he ended up winning, most likely along with a 1,000 other babies. He spent the rest of his life reminding people of the award, always in a tongue-in-cheek manner. While growing up in Deland, he spent much of his time hunting, fishing, playing poker and pursuing his lifelong love of music, which lasted for over 70 years. As a teenager, he mastered both the bassoon and piano and regularly competed in music competitions, which won him numerous first place awards. He played bassoon for the Orlando based Florida Symphony in the 1970’s and 80’s but continued to play in concert bands well into his 70’s.

Upon graduating from Deland High School, Dr. Lee was accepted to the Julliard School of Music but decided to attend Duke University for which he maintained a lifelong devotion. While at Duke, he continued his music studies and pledged the Sigma Nu Fraternity. Even in his 80’s he would still serenade people with his favorite song, “Sigma Nu Girl”, which his family heard at least 1,000 times, and talk about fictitious fraternities including the “Bum-a-Sigs”, the “I-Felt-a-Thigh’s” and a name not fit for a family newspaper. After graduation, Dr. Lee went back to his beloved Deland where he enrolled in Stetson University and earned a Master Degree in Music. Soon after, he was required to serve two years in the military

and spent them with the West Point Marching Band in New York. While at West Point, he met his first wife of nearly 42 years, Gwen Clark, who was attending one of his concerts. As the story goes, when they first met she was not in the least bit charmed by his numerous jokes and stories about Deland. She was from New York City and at the time she had no idea where Deland was and was bewildered by his stories about alligators, orange groves, hunting, Deleon Springs and fishing on the St. Johns River. Despite their differences, his charm eventually won her over and they married in 1959. Soon after, they had their first of four children and it was this time he determined that he could “never could make enough money” as a professional musician to support a growing family and enrolled in the Pennsylvania State School of Optometry in Philadelphia. He excelled at the school and was eventually elected the Senior Class President by his fellow students. Always modest about his academic accomplishments, he liked to add that he once had to “bribe” an Organic Chemistry professor with a station wagon full of oranges from Deland in order to pass his class.

Upon graduation, he moved his family to the Maitland area to work for the Bayshore Group, an early pioneer of contact lenses and one of the most well regarded optometric firms in the state of Florida. Through his hard work and personality, he quickly rose to partner at the practice, which soon became known as Bayshore, Swanson, Sowers, Lee and Yager, and eventually earned the title of “Diplomate”, the highest award in the profession. During his nearly 40 years in practice, he enjoyed an outstanding reputation for his patient care and knowledge. Although he published numerous research articles, received multiple industry awards and conducted contact lens research for the top companies in the industry, he was most well-known for his sense of humor, friendliness and storytelling during exams. Over the years, his patients learned everything about his family and their activities, which was frequently met with deep embarrassment from his children once they learned everything he had told people. Later in life, his children were constantly reminded by patients, many of who were among the most well-known business and community leaders in the area, how much they enjoyed his stories and for these reasons would continue to see him even after they had moved as far as 75 miles from the Orlando area.

Dr. Lee raised his family in Maitland where his kids all attended the local schools, including Park Maitland, Dommerich Elementary, Maitland Junior High and Winter Park High School. During this time, he gave back extensively to the community and served in numerous civic and volunteer roles. These roles are too numerous to name but include the Orlando Jaycees (Distinguished Service Award), Maitland Rotary, Maitland Civic Center (President), Maitland Men’s Club, City of Maitland Lakes Advisory Board, Florida Symphony, Maitland Little League Coach and Umpire, Indian Guides Leader, the

announcer (or as he preferred to call it “the voice of the Wildcats”) for the Winter Park High School baseball team as well as the President of the Winter Park Football Quarterback Club. Some of his fondest memories were watching Maitland Little League games, the Winter Park Crew team and the Winter Park Wildcat football team going 41-7 over a three-year period. During the 1985 Wildcat football season, he was especially proud to see his son, Bill Jr., recognized as both the “Central Florida Defensive Player of the Year” and a finalist for “Scholar Athlete of the Year”. After his last son, Jason, graduated from Winter Park, he donated a life size Wildcat to the school, which still sits on the campus today. In addition to being a fan of football and baseball at school, he was also a supporter of the Winter Park Crew Team, which won numerous state titles in the late 1970’s. His wife, Gwen, and he were together at almost all of their children’s events during this time but passed away in 2001 with him at her side. Although not outwardly expressive of his faith, he was a devout Catholic his entire life who attended Mass almost every week and was a member of St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church for over 30 years.

In his late 70’s he married Norma Allen, who provided him with happiness, companionship and comfort in his final years. Looking back during the last few weeks of his life, Dr. Lee felt his proudest achievement was the education, accomplishments and character of his children and grandchildren. Academic institutions attended by his family include University of Pennsylvania, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, West Point Military Academy, Carnegie Mellen, Manhattan College, Cal Berkley Law, Wharton School of Business (Masters), University of Central Florida (Masters), Trinity College of Ireland and Marymount College. Other family accomplishments include participation in college athletics including football, basketball, crew and his grandson, Gavin Hoffman, achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

Dr. Lee was preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Edna, his brother the Honorable Robert E. Lee, and his beloved first wife Gwen. He is survived by his current wife, Norma Allen and her daughter, Charlie, and his four children; Kristin Hoffman (David) of Vienna, VA, Diane Mohen (Jimmy) of Stamford CT, William C. Lee Jr. (Melissa) of Winter Park, Jason Lee of Casselberry and ten grandchildren including, Gavin Hoffman, Carson Hoffman, William C. Lee III, James Lee, Anderson Lee, Bennett Lee, Robert Mohen, Elizabeth Mohen, Michael Mohen and Samantha Mohen. He also liked to say that he had five grand dogs. His last words to his family were a deep expressions of the love and pride he felt for all of them and how his last living memories would be of the good times they had together as a family. He led a full and accomplished life and went to the Lord deeply loved, admired and missed by all who knew him.

Following the Funeral Mass there will be a Private family graveside service at Glen Haven

Memorial Park Cemetery in Winter Park, FL.

There will be a reception at 11:00 AM at the...

Winter Park Racquet Club 2111 Vía Tuscany, Winter Park, FL 32789.

# Events

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**JUL** **Visitation** 06:00PM - 08:00PM

**8**

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DeGusipe Funeral Home & Crematory - Maitland Chapel  
9001 N. Orlando Avenue, Maitland, FL, US, 32751

**JUL** **Prayer Service** 07:00PM

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DeGusipe Funeral Home & Crematory - Maitland Chapel  
9001 N. Orlando Avenue, Maitland, FL, US, 32751

**JUL** **Funeral Mass** 09:00AM - 10:00AM

**9**

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St Margaret Mary Catholic Church  
536 N. Park Ave, Winter Park, FL, US

**JUL** **Reception** 11:00AM

**9**

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Winter Park Racquet Club  
2111 Via Tuscany, Winter Park, FL, US, 32789

# Comments

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“ Ha Le lit a candle in memory of William Chalker Lee, Sr.



Ha Le - July 18, 2016 at 10:38 AM

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“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of William Chalker Lee, Sr..



July 07, 2016 at 11:21 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album Tribute Wall2



**Kristin Hoffman** - July 06, 2016 at 04:25 PM



“ Trying not to cry here. My dear sweet uncle and godfather Dr. Bill Lee rescued, loved, and cared for countless animals throughout his life, dogs being his favorite four-legged creature. I'm certain that when he got to the other side yesterday morning, all these innocent little souls greeted my Bill with the greatest rejoicing.

Mary Lee Cook

**Mary** - July 06, 2016 at 11:04 PM



“ The dogs name is Bandit and the humans name is William lee  
**william** - December 08, 2016 at 06:53 PM



“ What a wonderful man. My wife, Marianne and I began visiting Doctor Lee when we were teenagers and always looked forward to our visits. Several of his favorite funny stories were about my mother, Dorothy "Dottie" Soistman. They both loved to joke and laugh. Whenever he was treating her, people in the waiting room could hear them both laughing loudly. He was truly a blessing to us and we are thankful for his friendship. Marianne and Ed Soistman

**Marianne and Ed Soistman** - July 06, 2016 at 12:54 PM



“ Many thanks for your very kind words about my beloved uncle and godfather Bill Lee. I was so lucky to have this wonderful man in my life and will miss him to the day I die.

My sister Virginia and I always doted on our Uncle

Bill. Though my uncle could tease a kid half to death we both adored the ground he walked on.

Mary Lee Cook

**Mary Lee Cook** - May 15, 2017 at 07:49 PM



“ Cherished Memories was purchased for the family of William Chalker Lee, Sr..



July 06, 2016 at 11:07 AM