



## William Russell Wilcox

August 10, 1944 - May 3, 2023

William Russell Wilcox was born August 10, 1944 to Darrell Cleveland Wilcox and Betty (don't call her Elizabeth) Jane Cochrane Wilcox in Pittsburg, PA. He attended Aspinwall HS and was in the first (1962) graduating class of Fox Chapel HS where he played football and soccer. He graduated from Penn State University in 1966 with a degree in Forestry and is a member of Tau Phi Delta forestry fraternity. On November 5, 1966 he married his love since sophomore home room, Susan Elizabeth Eckler. They lived briefly in Newcastle, PA before he reported for Navy Flight Training in Pensacola, FL where they eventually lived until he was sent to Naval Intelligence training near San Francisco. His permanent duty station was San Diego where they lived for almost 3 years, taking the opportunity to explore California - desert, mountains, seaside, and cities. Bill loved to hunt and arranged a trip to Colorado to hunt elk near Fairplay with college classmates and a Navy buddy wanted to go along and hunt near Fort Collins.

What an impression Fort Collins made on the couple, so much that Bill enrolled at CSU when he left the Navy in 1970. He received his masters degree in Forest Products Utilization. While studying, he and Sue did a lot of camping and hunting and then he and a friend built a cedar canoe, which, of course, had to be "tested" for fishing and sightseeing. He also completed credits towards a doctorate before accepting a district forester position with Wyoming State Forest Service. He received 6 months of training in Newcastle

in the Black Hills before being assigned the far western quarter of Wyoming counties as his district. He and Sue explored all the area had to offer: canoeing on the Green and Hams Fork Rivers, Bridger National Forest, again camping, riding horses, hunting, and fishing.

In 1975, a call came offering him his dream job in Forest Products Marketing and Utilization with Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) in Fort Collins, visiting all 13 Districts. Not long after that, their son Rusty arrived, creating a whole new adventure, and they bought a home and acreage for their horses. Bill often biked to work, swam laps, took long dog walks, and ran, completing the Denver Marathon. A daughter, Rebecca, arrived in 1979. The family camped often, and went fishing, but hunting was his favorite activity, using his horses to pack out the meat. As the children grew up, they began snowshoeing, graduating to cross-country skiing, and when the kids discovered downhill skiing, there was no turning back. They didn't like being rousted out at 5 am, but loved skiing at Snowy Range in WY and graduating to Loveland, Copper Mountain and Winter Park. The family also took big trips to Yellowstone in winter and Washington DC (they walked the kids legs off). He took several trips to Alaska to hunt and fish, one with Rusty, who also accompanied him to fish off Baja, Mexico. Bill worked his way up to Assistant State Forester, which involved trips to Denver to lobby the Legislature. Bill and Sue traveled to Mexico and Hawaii for anniversary and work-related trip. Work also took him to Australia. In his spare time, he and Sue coached Rusty's soccer team at Waverly School.

Enjoying life, but ready to retire in 2000, he became house husband until Sue retired in 2002. But was asked to return to CSFS as the Acting State Forester for 9 months while they searched for a permanent person. This fulfilled his goal of being State Forester and the compensation allowed him to take a big-game hunting trip to So. Africa. He had a wonderful time and eventually had trophy heads for red hartebeast, impala, kudu, and a warthog, which became

a hat rack.

On one of their "duty vacations" to PA, Sue had said she wanted to really "see" the states they were whizzing through by spending a month in each state in their camper. They completed OK, AK (6 weeks), West TX, IA, NM, OR (one of many trips as Becca and Eric and children lived there), FL, NE, AZ, NM, and central and east TX. The tour of North Dakota was cut short when Bill's favorite dog got sick and they boogied back home. (Cody survived.)

Their one-month KS trip started w camping in the yard of friends, the Wisemans, near where Bill wanted to put up a deer stand for hunting after their month ended. He, Sue, and dog Cody set out to a favorite hunting spot and Bill climbed to about 20 feet, only to tumble to the ground, suffering a spinal cord injury about mid-chest. Since Bill had pointed out landmarks on the way in, Sue was able to direct EMTs. He was airlifted to Kearney, NE where he had surgery and was fitted with a brace. After 3 weeks he was moved to Lincoln, NE for rehab, which lasted over 2 months. Returning home 2 days before Christmas, they found wonderful neighbors had cut and decorated a tree for them. And in the meantime, a long-time friend had remodeled their old farmhouse with ramps, wider doorways, and pocket doors. Their neighbors are the best.

The remodeled home had no enclosed space for Bill to transfer to a vehicle in bad weather. Carpet made rolling difficult, and the 2nd floor was out of the question. Bill suggested they build a more suitable home on their property and sell their house to Rusty and his family. Sue supervised the construction and utility work til they moved in in May 2010, with the help of family, many friends, neighbors, and Hope Fellowship members. Fellow employees of CSFS planted a windbreak and installed drip irrigation. Many friends make life good.

Bill and Sue continued travel with a new wheelchair-lift-equipment camper trailer. They covered more of Arizona to hunt deer and turkeys with the help of the Wisemans, and bagged a cow elk this January. Bill walked the dog using his wheelchair and eventually a handcycle. He swam laps with help, and worked out twice a week with Sandy Aldern, a great cheerleader and dear family friend.

In April 2023 he caught a cold, which turned to pneumonia and was very well cared for for 10 days in PVH ICU before deciding that he did not want to be hooked up to machines any more. Accent Hospice Staff cared for him very well in his home until he died on May 3, 2023.

He leaves behind Sue, his wife of 56 years; son Rusty, his wife Teresa Ann (Kisner) and daughters Satin and Baily of the family home; his daughter, Becca, husband Eric Thompson and children Liam and Kyra of Portland, Oregon; Aunt Doris Cochrane of Allison Park, PA; Cousin Judi Jacobs and family of Tempe, AZ; and cousin David Cochrane and family of Clarks Summit, PA. He was preceded in death by his parents, his sister Sandra Nell, and his Uncle Bill Cochrane. A BBQ will be held in June to remember Bill.

Donations may be made to CSFS.

# Tribute Wall

SA

“ *Purple blessings to you all! I miss my good friend Billy every single day. What a guy!!!* 💜💜

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**Sandy Aldern** - May 15, 2023 at 11:20 PM