



# William T. "Bill" McConnell

AUG 8, 1933 - AUG 14, 2024



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## **William T. "Bill" McConnell**

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**W**illiam (Bill) Thompson McConnell, age 91, of Newark and Granville, died August 14, 2024 at Otterbein Granville Senior Life Community.

While his accomplishments and accolades are many, it is for his endearing, warm, and guileless personality that Bill will most be remembered. It is not too big a stretch to call Bill's sense of humor "legendary." He could land pitch-perfect one-liners seemingly effortlessly! You never left Bill's company without a smile on your face. That said, Bill was also deeply serious about the people and the causes that mattered to him. He was a compassionate listener, a trusted colleague, an impassioned advocate for higher education, and a true friend to everyone who knew him. And to his family, he was absolutely beloved and revered - an attitude of devotion that he returned to them, especially to his lifelong love, Jane.

Bill was born in Zanesville, Ohio, on August 8, 1933, to William Gerald and Mary Gladys (Watt) McConnell and spent much of his life in the Central Ohio area. He graduated from Zanesville High School in 1951, from Denison University in 1955 (Bachelor of Arts - Economics) and from Northwestern University in 1959 (Master of Business Administration with Distinction). While at Denison he met and later married (1956) Jane Cook McConnell (1935 - 2007). Bill and Jane lived primarily in Newark and Granville for the rest of their lives, raising a family, becoming engaged members of the community, and building many long-term friendships and relationships. Bill was a loving husband, father and grandfather. He was father to two children, Jennifer Wynne McConnell and William Gerald McConnell (Anna Louise Hillen), and he had two grandchildren, Cameron Julian McConnell and Duncan Hillen McConnell.

After graduating from Denison, Bill served as an officer in the United States Air Force from 1956 to 1958. Upon returning to Central Ohio, Bill began a distinguished career with the Park National Bank in Newark. Joining the bank in 1961, Bill quickly



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moved through the ranks within the bank, and in 1973 he was promoted to Executive Vice President. He served on the Board of Directors beginning in 1977 and in 1979 was elected President. Bill added CEO to his title in 1983, and in 1987 he became President and CEO of Park National Corporation. He served as Chairman and CEO from 1994 to 1999, retained his position as Chairman until 2005, and served as Chairman of the Executive Committee until 2014. Under Bill's leadership, the bank realized significant growth and was recognized as a performance leader among community banks in the U.S. Bill also had many significant professional affiliations including: Chairman of the American Bankers Association, Chairman of the Ohio Bankers Association, and Director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.

Bill was dedicated to community service and philanthropy throughout his life, a commitment that Jane shared with him. He served as Director of United Way of Licking County, a member of the Denison University Board of Trustees, a Trustee of Licking Memorial Health Systems, Director of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Director of Newark Area Chamber of Commerce, a board member of A Call to College, and a Trustee of the Newark Campus Development Fund. Bill's life-long passion for education in general, and for higher education in particular, led to deep involvement with and support of various community educational institutions including OSU - Newark Campus, Central Ohio Technical College, A Call to College, and his and Jane's alma mater, Denison University. His lifetime of community service resulted in many honors, including a joint recognition of him and Jane, the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Licking Memorial Development Council.

The philanthropies and community service that Bill and Jane pursued represent just one aspect of the rich and joyous life they shared together. Bill was an unabashed admirer of strong and intelligent women, and in Jane he found the perfect example. Her death in 2007 was the greatest loss of his life.

No list of achievements and activities can adequately sum up a person like Bill McConnell. His spirit was one of genuine kindness and courtesy to all. He was the personification of honesty and integrity, attributes that shone in his personal relationships as well as in his community activities and professional life. Bill was committed to the notion that exceptional business results and responsible



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community behavior are not incompatible.

Always curious and eager to learn, Bill embraced interests that ran from mastering personal technology platforms (he became an expert at Lotus 123 macros), to films (though he avoided sad movies), to his extraordinary collection of P.G. Wodehouse books (he acquired a number of first-editions that would be the envy of any fine British library). He was organized to a fault, thriving on routines (he ate the same breakfast every single day of his adult life). For years Bill exercised by running in the early morning hours through the streets of Granville, simultaneously building up his physical stamina and listening to books-on-tape. Self-deprecating and ever willing to laugh at himself, he also loved to tease his friends about their own foibles. These characteristics and much more - his soft-spoken voice and his ready smile - will be long remembered and deeply missed.

The family would like to extend special thanks to Brenda Kutan whose friendship and support for Bill has been unsurpassed for over 48 years. In his final years, Bill benefited from loving and compassionate care that enriched his life. The family wish to express gratitude to Michele Layman for her steadfast leadership of and commitment to Bill's care and to the extraordinary caregivers who supported him: Linda Webster-Bennett, Joan Bonner, Dianna Dial, Sherry Young, Brandi Booker, Matti Booker, Kris Shell, Emily Blake and Kenzie Spaulding.

In celebrating Bill's legacy, the family invites those who would like to direct memorial gifts to A Call to College (314 Granville Street, Newark Ohio 43055; <https://www.acalltocollege.org/>).

A public memorial service will be held at 1:30pm on Saturday, October 5, 2024, at Swasey Chapel on the campus of Denison University in Granville, Ohio.



## Tribute Wall

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DB

**Deloes Bonner** posted:

TO THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF BILL McConnell:BILL WAS ONE OF THE SWEETEST, kindest, AND GENEROUS AND WARM MAN OF WHOM I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THROUGH MY MOTHER "DELORES BONNER" WHO WAS HIS CAREGIVER IN HIS HOME FOR "9" YEARS. MOST OH HIS EMPLOYEES Snd CAREGIVERS NOW WERE HIGHLY REFERRED AND RECOMMENDED BY MT MITHER AND THEY HAVE ALL BEEN EXCELLENT AND COMPASSIONATE CAREGIVERS UP TO HIS PASSING. MY MOTHER SPOKE HIGHLY OF BILL AND THOUGHT SO MUCH OF HIM. SHE WAS HIS CAREGIVER UP UNTILL A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AGO, HER HEALTH WOULD NO LONGER ALLOW HER TO DO THE JOB DUTIES SHE NEEDED TO DO TO TAKE CARE OF BILL. ACCORDING TO BILL, HE CALLED MY MOM "THE MOTHER OF EVERYBODY!" AND SHE STILL IS THAT TODAY SHE CONTINUES TO SPEAK HIGHLY OF BILL AND ALL THAT HE HAS DONE FOR THE COMMUNITY AND HELPING COLLEGE STUDENTS PURSUE THEIR GOALS AND CAREERS BY PROVIDING GRANTS TO STUDENTS IN NEED WE WANT TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE FOR HELPING THESE STUDENTS INCLUDING MY GRANDDAUGHTERS AS WELL WHO ARE IN NURSING!!! YOU WILL TRULY BE MISSED BY ALL AND HAVE BEEN A GREAT EXAMPLE AND MENTOR TO SO MANY!!!! I KNOW SO MANY HAVE BEEN BLESSED THROUGH YOUR GIVING, KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY! ♥♥♥REST IN HEAVEN, UNTIL WE ALL MEET AGAIN!DELORES BONNER - CAREGIVER AND MOTHER TO EVERYBODY.KATHY LEE - DAUGHTER TO DELORES BONNER.

October 5 at 8:36 AM

LP

**Lashonda Payne** posted:

Bill was one of the sweetest, most thoughtful, genuine people I have ever met. It was an honor and privilege to work with him. To know Bill was to love him. He had an energy about him where he never met a stranger, which was incredibly special to witness. He will be deeply missed. Sending love and prayers to Bill's family and loved ones ♥

August 22 at 7:21 AM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring William T. "Bill" by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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