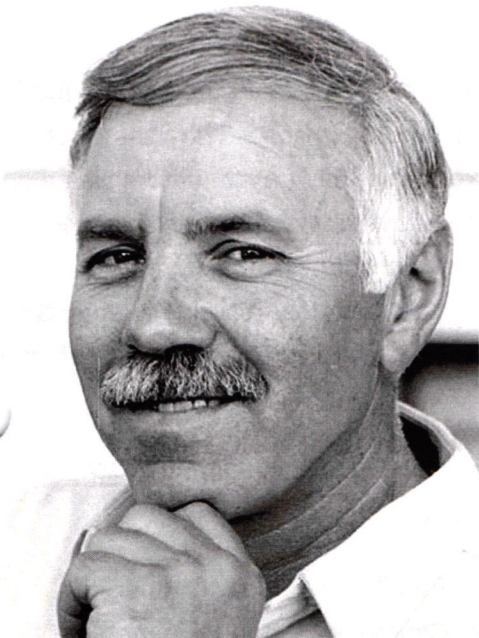


EAST OREGONIAN

William Charles 'Bill' Kopp

Published on March 23, 2017 1:52PM



Kopp

William (Bill) Charles Kopp was born in Pendleton on June 9, 1933, the first child of Bill and Lorraine Kopp. His young years were spent enjoying the outdoors at home and on weekend picnic trips to the mountains and fishing trips with his dad. Bill developed an interest in music at an early age and was in his first piano recital when he was seven years old. Music was an important part of his whole life. He continued to play the piano, sang in high school choirs and a quartet. His love of music brought joy to many who heard him play and sing.

Music, however, was not his only interest and starting in grade school he played a lot of basketball and baseball. Surviving a broken arm and a broken clavicle in grade school due to activities made him a "wonder" to his younger sisters.

Bill attended St. Joseph Academy until his sophomore year, then he transferred to Pendleton High School. He was involved in many aspects of Pendleton High School, music, basketball, and was the student body president his senior year. Bill also met his future bride at PHS. In his teen years he worked in his uncle's wheat harvest, helped his parents with a rural mail route and his dad's freight line. There were many skills needed living in a home with his five sisters: Annabelle, Barbara, Irene, Judy, and Nancy. Bill handled these with ease. His sisters recall him as a "great big brother" or in family stories as "super duper." A baby brother, Jim, was born the year Bill left for college.

After high school it was off to college to the University of Portland Air Force ROTC program. There, he was a standout basketball player, lettered at U of P and received his Bachelor of Science in psychology.

Soon after, wedding bells rang for Bill and his beautiful bride Kathleen. They tied the knot on October 1st, 1955. It was a beautiful fall wedding with one minor issue: it was opening day of deer season and hunters on both sides of the family were a bit chagrined. But the deep love of this couple immediately erased any mule deer disappointments.

After college he entered pilot training in the United States Air Force. Bill was selected to pilot one of the world's first supersonic fighter jet, the F86 Saber. In the early 1950s, pilots who broke the sound barrier were a rare breed. He was presented a certificate designating him a member of the "Mach Buster's Club." This certificate is proudly displayed in

the family home to this day. While still an active pilot and stationed in Albuquerque, Bill and Kathleen welcomed Linda Lorraine into the world. Bill left the USAF in 1958 and later retired as a captain in the Air Force Reserve.

After his service in the Air Force, Bill returned to Pendleton where he worked in the freight business. He was a partner with his father, Bill, in Pendleton-Pilot Rock Stage Lines for many years. Both Bill and his dad logged thousands of trips from Pendleton to Pilot Rock and back. Bill estimated that they had traveled the distance to the moon and back several times — in 12-mile increments.

Like his parents, he was not finished building his family. Over the next 10 years, Billy, Philip, Cari, Cathy, Christopher and Curtis completed the family.

Each sibling's earliest memories involve Bill's music. These memories included singing performances of favorite songs from musicals like "Mary Poppins" and "The Sound of Music," and especially Christmas carols. Bill's life of music inspired and entertained many. He provided worship in the form of the folk music at St. Mary's Catholic Church for decades. The Kopp house was full of music, whether it was Bill playing piano nearly every evening or playing selections from his extensive record collection.

Family vacations were always an interesting affair. With seven kids in tow, there were few quiet moments. The family's favorite destinations included Wallowa Lake and the Oregon Coast. Bill also continued to play basketball — mostly in the form of shoot-arounds with the neighborhood kids. Bill would arrive home from work and anytime there was a game going on in the driveway, he would join in. He had a great set shot — even in steel-toed boots and overalls. As the years passed and the children grew up, Bill enjoyed spending time with his 14 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. He and Kathleen also enjoyed traveling to attend family celebrations, theater, and sports events. Bill also served the community as a volunteer for Outreach, Meals on Wheels, and he was a Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) teacher for many years.

On March 20, 2017, Bill's parents Bill and Lorraine, his sister and brother Nancy and Jim, his son John Steven, and granddaughter Ashlee welcomed Bill to heaven. He will live on in all of our memories.

Recitation of the Rosary will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 26, 2017, at Pendleton Pioneer Chapel. The funeral Mass will be held at 10 a.m. on Monday, March 27 at St. Mary's Catholic Church, with a burial immediately following at Olney Cemetery.

Those wishing to may donate in Bill's name to The Ashlee Hodgen Scholarship Fund through Columbia Bank, P.O. Box 848, Pendleton, OR 97801 or the National Parkinson's Foundation, 200 S.E. First St., Suite 800, Miami, FL 33131.

Online condolences may be shared with the family at www.pioneerchapel.com



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