



William "Bill" Fisher

November 14, 2021

William "Bill" Fisher, 93, of Lancaster, retired sports editor of the Lancaster Sunday News, strode purposely off this mortal coil onto what we hope is the golf course of heaven, where he will continue to play past those who are too slow. Bill died November 14, 2021, predeceased by his beloved wife Arlene in 2019. They were married 62 years. Bill lived in his home until the end where he contentedly read books and watched Penn State football. Thank you to Lancaster Hospice & Community Care for helping make this possible.

Bill is survived by his daughters Mary Paton – who lived with and cared for him after Arlene died, and her children Elizabeth Paton (Tomas) and Dylan (Claire) and their twins Lydia and Abigail, Bill's great granddaughters who visited often and brought him great joy – and Ann Jungels and her children William (Shalyn) and Henry Jungels – who inherited Bill's robust enthusiasm for sports and enjoyed their trips together to Beaver Stadium.

Bill was born in Walkersville, Md., the son of the Reverend John and Henrietta Fisher, and brother to Lizette, Max and Eugene, all deceased. Bill graduated from Lemoyne (Pa.) High School (1946) and Lebanon Valley College (1950). He served in the Army during 1950-52, stationed in the German peace-keeping force, where he managed to go to the 1952 Helsinki Olympics while on leave. Sports were never far from his heart.

Though he started his newspaper sports writing career at the Milton Evening Standard, it was at Lancaster Newspapers where he made his mark. Bill chronicled the characters and chicanery, the famous and the strivers of the local sports scene. He interviewed Muhammad Ali at his Poconos training camp, stood up to McCaskey High School's bombastic Jack Cassebaum, and was part of Penn State football coach Joe Paterno's inner circle of reporters. He covered World Series, track meets, prize fights and college Bowl games. A teetotaler, Bill drank ginger ale in the dark, smoky bars of yore, hanging with the guys and gathering his intel. Bill loved his job.

Bill was an award-winning sportswriter, whose detail-oriented, stem-winding stories began appearing in "Best Sports Stories" anthologies in the 1950s. Bill was part of the venerable

tradition of entertaining, investigative sports writers – Grantland Rice, Dick Young and Red Smith – and generously passed along his passion to subsequent generations of writers. Bill's columns like "Sports Shorts of All Sorts" were required reading on Sunday mornings. Bill was inducted into many local and state Sports Halls of Fame. Bill always had the best seat in the house – at ringside, on the track and in the press box – and was determined to bring his readers along with him.

In the newsroom he met his wife Arlene who informed him on the day he retired, some 40 years later, that he needed a hobby, so he started making birdhouses, built from abandoned barn wood and flea market finds. He and Arlene, an artist, spent 20+ years selling their wares at arts and crafts shows. They loved to travel around the U.S. and Europe. Bill lived a full retirement, spending winters in Florida, going out to breakfasts and golfing with his great group of friends. He was a member of Covenant United Methodist Church.

Bill was a connoisseur of the written word. He believed in facts. Everywhere he traveled, he would buy a local newspaper. He lived a wonderful life.

Visitation will be held on Tuesday, November 23, 2021 from 10 – 11 a.m. followed by a Life Celebration at 11 a.m. at The Groffs Family Funeral Home, 528 W. Orange Street, Lancaster, Pa. Interment will be private, immediately following the service. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to a fund in his name with the goal of starting a sports journalism scholarship. Send donations to the Penn Manor Education Foundation (PMEF), PO Box 1001, Millersville, Pa. 17551; please note Bill's name.

Events

NOV **Visitation** 10:00AM - 11:00AM

23

The Groffs Family Funeral & Cremation Services Inc.
528 West Orange St., Lancaster, PA, US, 17603

NOV **Service** 11:00AM

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Comments



“ I worked at The Sunday News in the 1980s. I had absolutely no interest in sports, but I had the greatest respect and admiration for Bill. I cherish memories of long chats with him in late afternoon, after everyone else had gone for the day. His deep love for Arlene was one of his greatest assets. I loved to watch his face light up when he talked about her. Theirs was a true love story. After retirement, Bill and our co-worker Kay Rohrer would drive to Harrisburg annually to meet me for lunch. Bill loved Duke's restaurant on the river, just a stone's throw from where he grew up in Lemoyne. There we would sit on the deck and catch up. He was a wonderful, kind man.

Nancy Eshelman

Nancy Eshelman - November 21, 2021 at 03:11 PM



“ My condolences to the Fisher family. My heart grieves with you at this time. But to remember Bill is a lot like remembering my Dad... “Ohhh the stories!!” And everyone of those stories puts a smile on your face and an extra thump in your heart. I am blessed to have known Bill Fisher and Arlene who allowed me to go to school with a “Scrub”! (inside joke ask Ann) who really helped me to see the big pictures of life and to keep on keeping on. Life will be different without him, and our job is to keep honoring him with our lives. Bill Fisher was more than stories, birdhouses, and golf. He was a leader and fine gentleman deserving of awards and more, but he was also down to earth honest, compassionate, and loved life to the fullest. He has taught a lot of lessons that we carry out daily. Blessings to you

Sam Mylin

P.s. Thanks Bill for making my face leak again. ☐

sam mylin - November 21, 2021 at 09:30 AM



“ Dear Ann and Mary and Family: Deepest sympathy to you on the death of your Father, You were so blessed to have such special parents. I have wonderful memories of all of you: baby sitting, Good's Dairy days, and backyard fun and Mr. Good's field behind our homes. Very sorry for your loss. Your Dad was so upbeat and positive every time I saw him. I'm sure he will be sorely missed.. the world is not the better without him.
Your friend,
Deborah Jenkins Dunn

Deborah Dunn - November 21, 2021 at 07:20 AM



“ Dear Fisher Family,

Please accept our sincere condolences and sympathy.

Reading his life in review in the Lancaster newspaper he certainly lived a full life and leaves behind a wonderful legacy.

Please find comfort in the knowledge he's reunited with Arlene - we're sure she's happy to welcome him "home".

Warm Regards, Rob Shingle & Jim Keener

Rob Shingle - November 19, 2021 at 02:42 PM



“ Back in the '80s, I proudly handed over copy for a volleyball story I'd written for Bill. My first-ever (and only-ever) sports story. It was well-written and entertaining ... I thought. Bill shredded it, pointing out grammatical errors and storyline gaffs, throughout. I was heartbroken. But Bill patiently sat with me, poring over the story, explaining his notes and corrections. That was the beginning of a two-decade mentor/mentee friendship. His gentle guidance helped me to become a much better writer, broadened my journalism career and showed me the importance of gifting the next generation of writers with journalistic knowledge. I carried the latter with me to Elizabethtown College, where, for 10 years, I shared Bill's wisdom with communications students. Thank you, Bill, for setting me on a happily creative journey. You helped make me a better writer and a much wiser person. You will be missed, friend.

E.A. Harvey - November 19, 2021 at 10:06 AM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of William "Bill" Fisher.



November 19, 2021 at 09:58 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of William "Bill" Fisher.



November 19, 2021 at 08:33 AM