



George William Church Jr.

December 23, 1932 - February 7, 2014

Visionary businessman George William “Bill” Church, Jr. died in Austin, TX on February 7th. Bill was born in Kansas City, MO December 23, 1932 and served in the U. S. Navy from 1951-1955 as an aircraft mechanic. When his father, Church’s Fried Chicken founder George W. Church, Sr. died suddenly in 1956, his sons took over responsibility of running the company. In 1962, Bill assumed leadership and with his vision and direction propelled the business to expand nationally and finally internationally to become a Fortune 500 company. Bill had a lifelong love of chess and was ranked as a “Class A” chess player. An accomplished and passionate golfer, Bill was a Founding Member of Troon Golf and Country Club in Scottsdale, AZ where he formed many friendships. He enjoyed the study of physics, participating and investing in alternative energy research. Conservative by nature, but open-minded, he respected the views of others and enjoyed political and philosophical debate. He will be dearly missed as a beloved father, uncle, friend and mentor.

He is preceded in death by his parents Jessie and George Church, siblings Richard Church, Virginia Bloxham Sholund, and Robert “Bob” Church. He is survived by sister Jeane Buldain, children Melinda G. Church, George William Church III and their mother Kaye C. Edwards, grandchildren Shayna Bright, Anton Curley, Audrey Church and Miles Church, and many nieces, nephews and their families. A private memorial was held by the immediate family.

Comments



“ I was his friend for over 50 years ever since he took a course in trigonometry that I taught at San Antonio College in 1957. It turned out that we knew each other at Brackenridge High School when we graduated in 1949. He did a lot of good things in his life beside taking Church's Chicken up to a level that scared the pants off of Kentucky Fried Chicken. He sponsored an important chess tournament in San Antonio in 1972, bringing in the top chess players in the world. He was also a friend of George Koltanowksy in San Francisco one of the top Grandmasters in the world and record holding Blindfold chess champion for many years. Some of the best memories I have are the times that Kay and Bill and my wife Audrey and I (and at times Koltanowsky) would go out to some fine San Francisco restaurant and listen to Bill and Audrey argue all night long about politics. I saw him last at his place in Austin in 2012 or 2013. I will miss him and never forget him. I was un-aware of his passing until today.

Clement E. Falbo, "Clem"

Clement Falbo - June 27, 2016 at 05:38 PM



“ In honor of our personal relationship as his banker I would like to send a memorial charitable gift. Pleas advise the suggested name and address? My sympathy goes out to Bill's family. We had a very good friendship for many yeas and I remeber him as a capable dedicated leader of his family and his business. Tom Frost (tcfrost@frostbank.com)

tom frost - February 21, 2014 at 09:10 AM



“ We will always remember our days with Bill at Brackenridge High School with great fondness! Sincere condolences from our family to Bill's. Ken and Shirley (Vallance) Albert

Ken Albert - February 20, 2014 at 10:45 PM



“ What a brilliant mind and special person. My husband and I met Bill in 1963 when he started working with Bill and there are too many memories to share. Most of them stay in the heart.

My family was fortunate for having known this man.

My condolences to the family and especially to Kaye.

Allene Lehmberg Knaupp

Allene Lehmberg Knaupp - February 18, 2014 at 04:06 PM



“ Uncle Bill was my favorite uncle of the Church family. In my early teenage years I would spend part of the summer at my Grandmother's house or at Uncle Bill's. I would work in the CFC store across from the Alamo and later at the main store with Bill and cousin Robby. He was always cheerful and had a unique smile that made me feel like he was interested in what I had to say and had something valuable to say to me. He would wait to see if I got it. I felt like Bill and Kaye were the perfect family. It was such a relaxing escape from my own family chaos.

I remember riding in his baby blue Austin Mini 850. I owe my love of Minis to that experience. I now drive a 2006 Mini and will probably keep it forever. I am a certified Miniac.

On another occasion he took me to a meeting of his research group at the Mind Science Foundation. They would place their fingertips on a large round table and communicate with spirits that would raise a leg of the table and tap the floor once for yes, twice for no, or count to a letter to spell out a name. The spirit I remember was Barney. I even sat on the table suspended on one leg with the fourth leg jumping up and down off the floor. I later asked if that was really a spirit and he said they did not know for sure, it may be the energy from the people around the table focused together. What an experience I'll never forget!

The last time I saw him was at the Church family reunion in the summer of 2000. He had the same unique smile. He was a great man and had a big influence on my growing up that affected the rest of my life.

Rick Church - February 18, 2014 at 03:24 PM



“ Newly transferred from Kansas City to the Headquarters of CFC in April of 1977, I one day, encountered a man in the parking lot. I couldn't help but notice the unique car he arrived for work in, having never seen one like it, I asked him what it was. The man went onto proudly inform me it was a French Citroen, produced by Peugeot. He proudly gave me a brief primer (but no test drive) on not just the French made vehicle, but the founder and manufacturer. Eager to introduce myself to this fellow auto enthusiast, it was only then that I realized I was talking with Bill Church, Jr.! I was honored then, as now, to have had the opportunity of working with him and his fine company for many years.

Don Bode, Raleigh, North Carolina

Don Bode - February 17, 2014 at 03:20 PM



“ I worked for him or several years. He designed the fryers, the filtering system and even the kitchen layouts. He knew everyone in his employ, and everything they did in his employ, even after Church's became a large company. He was pretty amazing in that respect. He is, in large part, the reason for the success I am able to enjoy today. I appreciate his contribution to my well-being and I wish his family well.

John Keedy

John Keedy - February 16, 2014 at 04:37 PM



“ I called him Bill. Some others called him George. I was a math major and I thought he was too. Anyhow, we mostly played chess together. He loved the game and played it with enthusiasm and drew me into playing and joining a chess club which met in the basement of a church in Austin. I remember Bill telling me about his father's fried chicken business which began near the river in San Antonio.

I never saw Bill again after I graduated from U.T. but I always thought of him every time I saw a Church's Fried Chicken. Someone told me that he was retired and living in Austin and I wanted to look him up but never got around to it. Too bad for me and too bad for all of us who knew him. He was special.

Sam Young - February 16, 2014 at 11:00 AM



“ Hi Sam. I agree with you. I am sorry I did not know about his passing until just today. I las saw him in Austin in 2013

Clem Falbo

Clement Falbo - June 27, 2016 at 05:43 PM



“ He simply didn't fit any mold or pattern and was driven to make one of his own, in which it is likely that no one else will ever fit. He used it well and helped to make countless millionaires in the wake of his uncanny business acumen. He once told me that he didn't really know how to cook chickens very well, but he damn sure knew how to find the people to make it happen. And so he did. Big. Really big. So many will miss him, and I am one of those. Go well, old buddy, go well.
From George and Joyce Cooper

George Cooper - February 16, 2014 at 10:20 AM



“ RIP Bill we will miss one our High School buddies and running mates from Brackenridge classes of 51 and 51 again you will be missed Buster and Joyce Quarles from bandera tx

joyce quarles - February 16, 2014 at 09:03 AM