



William Dennis Gray

October 26, 1943 - November 20, 2023

William Dennis Gray passed away on Monday, November 20, 2023, less than a month after his 80th birthday in Austin, Texas. He was born on the 26th of October, 1943 in Dallas, Texas to the late William Ramsay Gray & Agatha Joan (Pappa) Gray, later moving to San Antonio in 1949. He was their first child and enjoyed a life-long relationship with his younger siblings, David and Jean (Boo). She is now the sole survivor of this family, as their brother, David passed in 2015. He spent the majority of his life living in San Antonio, graduating from Jefferson High School in 1961 before moving to Austin to attend college. He graduated from the University of Texas in 1972 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and settled back in San Antonio in 1977. He was a man of many names, with his family and old friends calling him Dennis to differentiate him from his father and nephew of the same name. For most he met in later life, he preferred to be called Bill, although sometimes he also was known as Doc, and to his kids, he was always known as Papa. Bill was an adventurous man, traveling the world while scuba diving and fishing, going to exotic locations such as Australia, South America, Alaska & the Caribbean, to name a few. He was an avid outdoorsman and conservationist, spending as much time as he could hunting, fishing and just generally enjoying nature. Many cold winter mornings were spent sitting in a deer blind at his brother's ranch with one of his children or David's grandkids, just waiting for the big buck to appear.

Bill also loved sports, whether it was playing or watching – many a morning

was spent on a tennis court, playing with the 50+ group. He spoke with gusto when describing his days as a high school football player and how much the game changed in the next 60 years. He was quite smart and a little bit devilish in displaying his competitive bent – in Monopoly, checkers, chess, poker – only to be humbled on the golf course. He looked forward to every autumn as that meant the start of college football and he would watch his beloved UT Longhorns faithfully every week, regardless of whether it was a good season. He especially enjoyed the numerous games he watched with his son Scott (and that it was an excuse to eat popcorn).

Bill had so many interests in a lot of different fields, including cave exploration, computers (when they still took up a whole room!), fix-it projects particularly with cars, outdoor activities, traveling, and spending time with family & friends. He even got his private-pilots license and flew over the Texas Hill Country with glee, taking his Dad with him on two occasions while his brother, sister & mother cautiously stayed-put firmly on the ground. He also loved to take his kids up in the air, always encouraging them to be adventurous in their hobbies and interests. He also relished spending quality time with his family at his brother's ranch, as well as the beach in Port Aransas, teaching his kids to fish & tirelessly untangling lines for them.

In his later years, he still enjoyed doing the unusual & in 2014, he won the title of 'Best Beard in San Antonio', beating out all of the flashy hipsters and in true William Dennis fashion flashed his support for his beloved UT Longhorns with a Hook 'Em to the crowd when he was crowned the Grand Champion!

Bill moved from San Antonio to Austin in 2019 and lived at the Clairmont Retirement Community where he enjoyed his daily full British-ish breakfast, companionship and close proximity to his children. He also loved visiting with his daughters' cats & giving them skritchies & treats (particularly Miko) as often as he could.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother David Stanley Gray & sister-in-law Deborah Gray. He is survived by his sister Jean "Boo" Gray & husband Dave Rinaldo, his daughter, Elizabeth Dawn Gray & wife Teresa

Simpson, son W Scott Gray, as well as their mother, Gail Hartfield Gray. Additionally, he is survived by nephews William Gray & wife LouAnn, David L. Gray & wife Jeannie and Monte Gray, along with numerous grand-nephews & grand-nieces, cousins and extended family.

According to his wishes, a small private ceremony will be held at a later date to spread his ashes with his brother's and parents'. In lieu of flowers, for any that wish to make a tribute donation, the family requests contributions be made to Texas Parks & Wildlife, as he was an avid outdoorsman, sportsman and conservationist.

Texas Parks & Wildlife:

https://secure2.convio.net/pwft/site/Donation2?df_id=1962&1962.donation=form1

Tribute Wall

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“ So many fond memories of Dennis. I loved his sense of humor. You could never win a game of Spite and Malice with him. So many times I tried. He was a stinker. He came down to Corpus many times and would call me and I would meet him and usually Scott was with him and we'd go fishing at Mustang Park. He was definitely one of a kind. Loved him and will miss him.
Penny

penelope Goodwin - December 08, 2023 at 09:43 AM

“Where the hell do you begin with a guy like Bill? My God, a giant personality somehow wedged into human form. My interactions with him were few over several years, but those few left an indelible impression on me. I first met Bill about the year 2000. I was about 16, newly friends with his daughter, and my enthusiasm for cars and all things mechanical left us on a collision course. That friendship with his daughter Liz has blossomed into a lifelong friendship which I will cherish forever.

I will forever remember going through the car buying process with him and Liz when she got her first car. It was my first time with this type of life event and I was beyond giddy to be involved. Liz and I did a bunch of leg work and thought we were pretty clever with our approach. When the time came to buy the thing, Bill showed up in the darkest sunglasses allowed by law. He then proceeded to sit in complete silence, sunglasses on, while the car salesman spun his best pitch as we all were crammed in his tiny office. The pitch ended and Bill looked up at us, utterly unimpressed, looked back at the salesman and, then again, sat in complete silence...for an excruciatingly long time. The poor car salesman looked to us for help, but we were more mortified than he was. Little did we know we were witnessing a master class in negotiation. Liz said something to try to prompt Bill and he finally made his first chess move. He pulled out a checkbook, set it on the desk, and casually offered a full 30% less than the asking price. The salesman was stunned and replied with a number that was astonishingly lower than what Liz and I had ever expected to be the final price. This went on for several rounds until Bill, unimpressed once again, put his checkbook back in his pocket, stood up, and walked out of the office. The salesman, after imploring us to intervene, chased after him and begged him to reconsider. Fast-forward 3 minutes and the negotiation had reached the point of bickering over 50 or so dollars at about 25% below the asking price. The salesman never stood a chance. That experience has stuck with me and I will always be grateful for the life lesson he taught us for free that day.

On a lighter note, I visited the Gray household in high school one day to find Bill in a state of pure amusement as he watched an episode of "America's Funniest Videos." Of course, at the time as a teenager, I was way too cool to laugh at such things. However, seeing a guy who could be as serious as he was at the mercy of a silly show always stuck with me. I've always interpreted that encounter as another life lesson, that humor is where you find it. If you can get some joy out of something as harmless as that show, life can be pretty darn entertaining if you're willing to let it.

I will forever yell "headache!" when I drop anything working on car because of Bill.

I will never forget travelling to Mexico with my parents and the Gray's.

I will never forget sitting next to him at the river, feet in the water, fish nibbling at our feet. He would remark that it was a free pedicure.

I will never forget the time we spent together at Liz and Teresa's wedding.

I will never forget William Dennis Gray.

Zachary Roberts - December 08, 2023 at 02:15 AM

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“ 13 files added to the album *Great Papa pictures*



Teresa Simpson - December 07, 2023 at 08:01 PM