



## Bill Swanson

March 28, 2020

Bill Swanson, 84, of St. Helena, California, died on March 28, 2020, of complications related to cancer. Bill was born to Edward and Margaret Swanson in 1935. He attended Withrow High School in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Miami University. After serving three years in the U.S. Navy, he earned an MBA from Carnegie Mellon University, where he graduated at the top of his class. Bill married Lois Ladley in 1961, and they had four children: Ed, David, Kristen and Jonathan.

Bill had a successful and diverse professional life. He worked with IBM, Bain Capital, and General Mills. He ran Smith's Crisps, a potato chip company in England, and he was president of the Parker Pen Company. He spent many years as an investment advisor, giving thoughtful guidance to large investors as well as to family, friends, foundations, and his church. He loved his work, and he never retired.

Bill also loved to help others. He served on the St. Helena school board. He was the board chairman of the Crescent Porter Hale Foundation, supporting programs for underserved youth and others in need. He served on the board of On The Move, developing youth leadership in Napa County. He spent years serving in the leadership of the United Methodist Church of St. Helena. And he was involved in many projects with Lois, from Opportunity International, supporting low-income women entrepreneurs in developing countries, to the Rianda House, providing opportunities for seniors in St. Helena.

What Bill loved most, though, was his family. He and Lois made such a happy

couple. They were high school sweethearts, and they spent 53 years of marriage seemingly amazed at their good luck in finding each other. Bill was a wise, funny, generous, supportive, steady, and always-loving father. He taught his children how to be good parents by his remarkable example. And he was a dedicated and beloved grandfather, never missing a soccer or volleyball match, traveling countless miles to spend time with his grandchildren, and letting each of them know how much he loved them.

Bill led a rich and happy life. He maintained deep friendships from high school and college, and from his years in Wisconsin and St. Helena. He had friends of all ages who appreciated his dry wit and who turned to him for counsel and guidance. He took delight in so much: his beloved and always-promising-but-rarely-delivering Cincinnati Reds, John le Carré, the Duke men's basketball team, politics, world affairs, and the triumphs and struggles of every member of his family.

Bill and Lois would say every time the family got together, "Didn't we have fun?" They did. We all did.

Bill was preceded in death by his wife, Lois, and his son, David. He is survived by his three children and their spouses, Ed and Paul (Mill Valley, California), Kristen and Chris (Denver, Colorado), Jonathan and Wendy Sue (Madison, Wisconsin), and his daughter-in-law Sally (Durham, North Carolina); his eight grandchildren, Terra, Hayden, Cambry, Katherine, Liza, Calyx, Finn, and Oden; his sister, Jean Marritt; and his nieces, Peggy and Kate, and nephew, Bill.

A service to celebrate Bill's life will be held when circumstances allow.

Should friends desire, memorial contributions can be made to Rianda House Senior Activity Center (1475 Main Street, St. Helena, CA 94574, [riandahouse.org](http://riandahouse.org)) or to Voices Youth Centers, a program supporting young adults transitioning from foster care (780 Lincoln Avenue, Napa, CA 94558, [voicesyouthcenter.org](http://voicesyouthcenter.org)).