



William Norton Leverage

DEC 29, 1935 - FEB 25, 2024



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William Norton Leverage, age 88, passed away in his home on February 25, 2024, under the loving care of the Willowbrook Court staff at Manor House in Seaford, Delaware, and Compassionate Care Hospice. His daughters surrounded him with love and fond memories as he transitioned to his heavenly home to reconnect with those who went before him.

Bill was born on December 29, 1935, in Milford, Delaware, to Robert Norton Leverage and Mary A. Leverage. He attended Milford High School, where his senior high school yearbook described him as a member of the glee club, an athlete, and a “wolf in men’s clothing” (when it came to the ladies!). After a stint at the University of Delaware, he enlisted in the United States Navy in 1956, where he served our great country for more than twenty years. Early in his career, after a few years of traveling the world as a naval officer, he agreed with his buddy to have a blind “double date,” where he met Miriam Storey, a high school teacher in Virginia Beach and the love of his life. They married in 1959.

During his service, Bill was stationed on four aircraft carriers - the USS Constellation, the USS Kitty Hawk, the USS Independence, and the USS John F. Kennedy. Beginning his Navy career as an aviator and flight instructor - the first Navy man to graduate from the Air Force technical instructor course at Lowry Air Force Base in Colorado -, he ultimately found his true passion in intelligence work. He served as the Kennedy’s intelligence officer and undertook his longest “cruise” in the Tonkin Gulf during the Vietnam War, missing 13 months of his daughters’ young lives. He always said Navy wives are the most special of all military wives, having been in awe of Miriam as she navigated raising an infant and toddler on her own and running the household during his multiple deployments. On retirement, Bill was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation with 4 Stars, the Military Unit Commendation, the Navy Commendation Medal, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal. He then continued his civilian career in defense contracting in the Washington, D.C. area, where he described his work vaguely as “consultant” or “analyst,” sometimes adding “management” as a qualifier, depending on who



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was asking. By that time, he had earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from George Washington University while working full-time.

Bill and Miriam built a beautiful life together with their two daughters, mostly in Vienna, Virginia, where they moved when he was transferred to the Pentagon for what became his final tour of duty with the Defense Intelligence Agency. As a father, Bill was the epitome (usually) of patience with his girls, driving them to and from music and dance lessons, games, cheerleading practices, after-school activities, and friends' houses, and sitting for hours patiently helping with math homework after a long day of work. Although he lived 88 years, he might have lived longer had he not taught both daughters to drive on a manual transmission car back in the late '70s and early '80s. If he got whiplash, he never complained, but until the day he died, he would happily tell the story of "almost eating a mailbox" when Nancy was driving a touch (!) too fast around a curve on a narrow road. He was the "starter" extraordinaire for the Shouse Village Sharks swim team, with his white shorts, white shirt, and steady "take your mark" words followed by a "bang!" becoming iconic symbols for a generation of Sharks, including his daughters. Every summer, he and Miriam took the girls to the beach at Nags Head, where the four of them shared one motel room, made in-room pimento cheese sandwiches, deposited far too much sand on the Holiday Inn carpet, and created warm and happy memories to last lifetimes.

When Miriam died in 1996 after nearly 37 years of marriage, Bill retired from it all and moved to Maryland to live on the Choptank River, where he had a boat he loved to take out on lovely days. The water was always his home and his joy. He joined a barbershop quartet, got involved with the VFW and American Legion, and was a devoted volunteer worker and craftsman in constructing the reproduction of the Schooner Sultana, which launched in 2001. For many years, he enjoyed traveling and exploring with his long-time companion, Bonnie.

In his final years, he lived a fulfilling life at Manor House in Seaford. There, the staff affectionately called him "the mayor" and appreciated the compassion and understanding he showed to the staff and other residents. He made good friends, coordinated coffee chats, and in his later years toured around the facility on his scooter heartily greeting everyone and sharing a big smile.

Although he could be cantankerous at times, Bill will be fondly remembered for his humor, his pride in his country, his master jokesterism, his love for his family and friends, and for always



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having a huge, warm smile and hearty, sincere greeting for all. As the Manor House staff said, “we loved him.” Indeed, we all did. A lot.

Bill is survived by his daughters, Nancy Leverage Rieckmann (Dave) of Mineral, Virginia, and Elizabeth Leverage Hilles (Scott) of Crozet, Virginia; his grandchildren: Bryan Rieckmann (Casey) of Charlottesville, Virginia, and Brittany Grabowski (Joe) of Richmond, Virginia; and a step-granddaughter, Lydia Hilles, of Charlottesville, Virginia. He was overjoyed to meet his great-grandson, Oliver, last October.

Bill will be laid to rest with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery on a date to be determined.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating in Bill’s memory to Delmarva Teen Challenge of Seaford, Delaware (delmarvateenchallenge.org) or a charity of your choice. Or celebrate Bill by enjoying a bowl of strawberry Häagen-Dazs ice cream, which made him pretty darn happy during his final weeks.

Pease sign the virtual guestbook located on the tribute page.



Tribute Wall

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Janet Hahn posted:

Arlie and I are honored to have known Bill for 35 years through Nancy and Dave. His love for his family was always center stage—as was his love for “the ladies”. He always made me feel beautiful and special, especially when I was feeling neither. He will be missed, and remembered very fondly ❤️
❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️

February 28 at 7:48 AM



Lane Moss lit a candle in honor of William.

What a beautiful story! Nancy may you and your family find strength in the love and memories shared with your dad. ❤️With sympathy and friendship, know I am here for you!



February 27 at 10:53 AM



Beth Shenton posted:

Reading this, Nancy, I feel like we knew your dad. What wonderful memories! Sending you love and light and comfort. Here for you, always. Beth & all of us at LAWS

February 27 at 10:40 AM



Joanne Grabowski posted:

He was a joy to sit with during Joe and Brittany’s wedding. He had a great sense of humor and you could tell he loved being there. I loved reading more about him and his history. My thoughts and prayers are with the family. Sending hugs!

February 27 at 6:45 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring William by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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