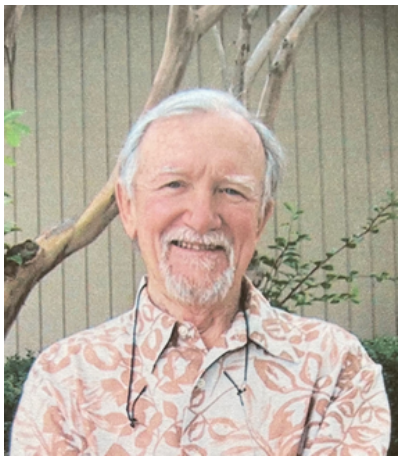


# William Griffith Clotworthy

*January 13, 1926 ~ August 19, 2021*

William (”Bill”) Clotworthy died peacefully in hospice in Salt Lake City, Utah, on August 19, 2021.

Born in Westfield, New Jersey, Bill attended Westfield High School and enlisted in the U.S. Navy towards the end of World War II. While serving from 1943–1945, he attended Wesleyan University and Yale University on the G.I. Bill before obtaining his Bachelor’s degree in Theater from Syracuse University in 1948. He performed in many theatrical productions and was an active member of the Sigma Chi fraternity. After graduation, he moved to New York City, where he began working as a page for the NBC television network.

After eight months, Bill was offered a job at the Madison Avenue advertising agency BBDO. As an advertising executive, he was part of the “Golden Age of Television”, working as the agency representative on classic programs such as “Your Show of Shows,” “You Bet Your Life” with Groucho Marx, “The Jack Benny Show,” and “Your Hit Parade.”

After moving to Los Angeles, California, in the early 1950s, Bill continued to be the agency rep on “The Danny Kaye Show,” “The Bing Crosby Show,” and “General Electric Theater” where he met and became lifelong friends with then-host and later U.S. president Ronald Reagan.

In 1974, BBDO transferred Bill to their New York office and promoted him Business Manager of Television Production where his duties included Celebrity and Over Scale Casting. But after 28 years in advertising, Bill decided to return to his roots at NBC, where he became an executive in the Standards and Practices division. While there, he worked as the “censor” on “The David Letterman Show”,” Late Night with David Letterman,” “The Cosby Show,” and several daytime dramas. In 1979, he once again found himself working at Studio 8H – the same studio where he had worked as a page with Arturo Toscanini’s NBC Symphony Orchestra – when he became the on-set Director of Program Standards for “Saturday Night Live.” During his 13 years with the show, the cast and crew affectionately referred to him as “Doctor No.” Bill retired from NBC in 1991.

After his retirement, Bill pursued his interest in history and became a prolific author and lecturer. He travelled across the U.S. to conduct research for his books on George Washington and the First Ladies as well as a series of guidebooks to presidential homes, libraries, and notable sites. He also published a memoir about his days working on SNL, titled “Saturday Night Live: Equal Opportunity Offender.” In 2012, the Westfield (N.J.) Historical Society inducted Bill into their Hall of Fame, recognizing him for his contributions to the entertainment industry as well as his historical research.

Bill was an enthusiastic genealogist for over 50 years, tracing his family roots back to the 11th century in England as well as the first permanent English settlement in North America at Jamestown. He was a proud member of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR).

Bill was a resident of Westport, Connecticut, for 24 years where he served as a member of the Representative Town Meeting. He later lived in Asheville, N.C., and Midlothian, Virginia, before settling in Salt Lake City in 2019. He was dignified, self-deprecating, funny, and considered puns to be the highest form of humor. He completed The New York Times crossword puzzle every Sunday and enjoyed singing and dancing to Big Band music.

Bill is preceded in death by his wives Joyce and Angela along with his younger brother, Olympic diving champion Robert (“Bob”) Clotworthy.

Bill is survived by his wife Jo Ann, his sons Robert and Donald, daughters Lynne and Amy, stepsons Peter and Bradford, and his grandson and namesake Will, as well as his nieces Susan, Jodi, and Erin and nephew Bruce. The family will be arranging a memorial service in Utah at a later date, followed by a small service in New Jersey where Bill’s ashes will be interred at the family cemetery in Westfield.

Bill was very proud of the fact that he had donated over five gallons of blood. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations (either monetary or pints of blood) to the American Red Cross. Bill lived with type 2 diabetes for 40 years, and donations to support diabetes research would also be appreciated.