

William Allen Spencer

June 23, 1936 ~ December 3, 2020

William A. Spencer

LTC, U.S. Army, (Ret.) - U.S. Olympian 1964, 1968

On a crisp winter morning, a life that began in a small southern town and was filled with adventure and achievement came to a close at his home in Sandy, UT on December 3, 2020. Although ten years of dementia stole from us the vibrant man he was and took his memories, he remained the gentle, caring person we knew. Truly, an officer and a gentleman.

William Allen Spencer, 84, was born in Russellville, Alabama on June 23, 1936, to Elsie Josephine Martin and Thomas Aubrey Spencer. His father's work brought the family to Utah where he attended Lincoln Jr. High, South High, Class of 1954, and the University of Utah, graduating in 1961. At the U. he was a member of Sigma Pi Fraternity and the U. Ski Team, earning the Alf Engen Sportsmanship Trophy and All-American Honors in 1959. While at the U. he met Judith Aspden. They married on December 21, 1960, at First Presbyterian Church, Salt Lake City.

As a member of the Utah National Guard's 19th Special Forces, he competed locally and nationally with the Guard Rifle Team. Combining his marksmanship and skiing skills, he was recruited by the Army in 1963 for the U.S. Biathlon Team stationed at Ft. Richardson, Alaska. Athletic achievements include U.S. Olympic Biathlon Teams 1964, 1968; U.S. 30km Cross-country Champion 1965; U.S. National Biathlon Champion and Canadian National Biathlon Champion 1966, 1967.

Following his competitive years, he served as an Infantry Officer, including two tours to Vietnam, retiring in 1984 as a Lieutenant Colonel. Military honors include three Army Commendation Medals, two Bronze Stars, a Bronze Star with Valor, two Air Medals, and an Air Medal with Valor.

Things he loved: a raging river to run, a mountain peak to climb, a marathon to race, birds at the window feeders, the deer that visit daily, a motorhome trip anywhere, National Parks, Alaska, powder snow on a ski run, a stream to cast a fly on, the Utes and Jazz, ice cream (any kind, any time), Cheez-its, Dr. Pepper and people. His life was fully lived from gliding across the snow on his skis and traveling the world, to heroism in battle, and grace on a dance floor, to sitting on the floor in an airport - a spit-polished Army Officer in dress blues - coloring with his two little girls.

Bill served as the U.S. representative on the International Biathlon Union (IBU) Technical Committee from 1973 to 2002, officiating at numerous World Championships, World University Games, World Cups, and Olympic Games. He was inducted into the Hall of Fames of U.S. Biathlon in 2000, Utah Sports in 2003, University of Utah Crimson Club in 2004, and Intermountain Ski in 2004 and was recognized with the Pioneer of Progress Sportsman Award in 2001 and University of Utah Ski Archives History Maker Award in 2005. He was honored to be selected along with

fellow Olympian Nikki Stone to escort the Olympic flame from Athens to Atlanta for the 2002 Olympic Torch Relay.

Bill is survived by Judy, his wife of 60 years and their three children and spouses: Bill Jr. and Eva Bertram, Santa Cruz, CA; Susan and Samuel Reckford, Short Hills, NJ; and Connie and Guy Adams, Salt Lake City, UT; grandchildren Spencer, Samantha and Molly Reckford and Eric Spencer; brother Thomas Martin Spencer and wife Emmy, Boulder, CO and their son Christian Juen, Innsbruck, Austria.

The family sincerely thanks Dr. Tiffany Volden and the staff at the VA Hospital and Clinic along with CNS Home Health Care and Hospice, especially Katherine, Jill, and Susan, for their compassionate care that allowed Bill to remain at home.

U.S. Biathlon has established a memorial fund in Bill's name – The Bill Spencer Fund for Developing Athletes, recognizing his lifelong contribution to biathlon in America. Gifts in his honor may be made to U. S. Biathlon, 49 Pineland Drive, Suite 301 A, New Gloucester, ME 04260, or at www.teamusa.org/us-biathlon.

Private burial at Larkin Sunset Gardens, Sandy UT.

A Celebration of Life will be held in the summer of 2021 when family and friends are able to travel safely.

In lieu of flowers, please take someone you love out for ice cream!