

William David Traeger

February 20, 1945 ~ August 7, 2023

William David Traeger, a good man, an honest man, a fair man and an honorable man, was also a family man. These definitions are not just flowery words. They are remembered by all who knew him. Besides that, he was a physical man—playing tennis, football, basketball, and softball. He also loved surfing, sailing, and cross-country skiing. But, for the past fifteen years, Bill was diagnosed with Parkinson's. Several years ago, the Parkinson's worsened and became the harbinger of greater physical difficulty. It, however, wasn't the cause of his death. He had a blood clot in his leg, which gradually moved to his lungs, thus affecting his heart. The unpredictable clot became the reason for the end of his life at age 78.

Born in the Bronx in New York City, on February 20, 1945, Bill moved to the West Coast with his mother and went by the name of Buddy di Donato for his first twenty years (then changing his name to Bill Traeger). He was a football star at James Monroe High School and was later the first string quarterback for the UCLA freshman team. Promised that he'd be on the varsity team, the coach who'd raised his hopes went elsewhere, and the new coach, without doing proper research into his assets, had other ideas.

Bill married Maureen Kennedy when he was a senior at UCLA and then, after graduating in Economics, became involved with marketing for Security Pacific Bank. Later he was a "workout guy" for the Bank Holding Company of Union Bank where he oversaw troubled loans. One of these was the Park Avenue project in Park City, which was ready to go under. Bill kept it afloat by selling the condos individually, then returned to North Hollywood, where Jennefer Nadine Traeger was born in 1971 and where he worked for Imperial Bank.

Nick Badami of Park City contacted Bill in 1975 and asked him to be Executive Director of the U.S. Ski Team, which position he accepted. There were hardly any stores in Park City, a lame grocery store on Main Street, a hardware store, a fledgling ski resort, no movie theaters, and a two-lane highway to Salt Lake City, but he and his wife decided to make the move. Gradually, the two of them became part of the community. A year later, they opened a laundromat—Soap Opera—which did quite well until Maureen wanted to return to teaching.

In October of 1978, Bill and the ski team were invited to the White House, and they met with Vice President Walter Mondale. Bill also arranged television rights with CBS for the ski team. Some of the skiers were Tamara McKinney, Cindy Nelson, and Phil Mahre, who won gold in alpine ski racing. The women were the strongest competition at Lake Placid.

In 1980, he divorced and moved to San Diego, where he began building 300-400 apartments. After a few years, he moved back to Salt Lake City and developed two Extra Space storage facilities. A world traveler and an owner in the Snowflower property units in Park City, he also developed two shopping center malls in Park City before returning to Dana Point, CA. There, he sailed his small boat and took classes in calligraphy and Chinese brush

painting. He was a consummate artist who sculpted, played Texas Hold ‘Em, and collected Asian art. Later he donated some of this art, including a suit of samurai armor, to the Utah Museum of Fine Arts. In the year 1998, he moved back to Park City where he met Phyllis Barber. The two were married for two years before a brief hiatus from that relationship. They later remarried and were still together until Bill’s passing.

Bill has one brother—Peter diDonato—of Southern California, and a niece and nephew—Melody and Greg. His one daughter is married to Jason Ford, and is the mother of Cooper and Thatcher. His deceased sister, Adrianne diDonato, is mother to Josh diDonato of Chicago.

Smooth sailing, wherever you are, Mr. Bill.