



# Dr. WILLIAM ELLERBE PELHAM JR

JAN 22, 1948 - OCT 21, 2023



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# **Dr. WILLIAM ELLERBE PELHAM JR**

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**D**r. William ("Bill") Ellerbe Pelham Jr. passed away just before sunset on October 21, 2023, surrounded by his wife, Maureen, and his two children, Will and Caroline.

Bill was born in 1948 to William E. Pelham Sr. and Kittie Copeland Kay. He grew up in Kensington, Maryland and Montgomery, Alabama as the eldest of four boys: Bill, Gayle, Jimmy, and John. He caddied at Montgomery Country Club, where he once carried for the Rev. Billy Graham, graduated from Sidney Lanier High School as the senior class Vice President, and moved north to attend Dartmouth College as a pre-med student. At Dartmouth, Bill became a hippie, nearly attended Woodstock before turning around due to traffic, and left college for a semester to protest the war in Vietnam. Bill also took a class with a beloved mentor, Rogers Elliott, who sparked an interest and career in clinical psychology and became a lifelong friend.

Bill taught special education in Amsterdam, NY for a year before obtaining a doctoral degree in clinical psychology at Stony Brook University in 1976. He then began a nearly 50-year career as a professor at five universities across the U.S., collecting lifelong friends at each stop, becoming a world-renowned authority on therapy for children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and training hundreds of scientists and clinicians working with children across the U.S. today. Bill developed and directed a therapeutic summer camp that helped thousands of boys and girls with ADHD, running every summer from 1980 to 2023. Many of his fondest professional memories were stories about the children, counselors, and colleagues he worked with at camp each summer. Bill met Maureen, the love of his life, while living in Pittsburgh, PA, where she worked as a speech pathologist in the same hospital that housed his ADHD clinic. He saw Maureen walking by in the cafeteria and remarked to his dining companion and close friend, Rich Milich, that he would be asking that woman out. Bill referred a patient of his own for a speech evaluation by Maureen, escorting the child to her office himself. Maureen's evaluation found little evidence of a speech problem, but did result in a first date on October 16, 1987, followed by marriage in 1990 and the start of their family with the birth of their son, Will, in 1992 and daughter, Caroline, in 1995. Bill's wife and children were his proudest accomplishments and



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his face would light up when speaking about them to others. Bill, Maureen, Will, and Caroline lived together happily in Pittsburgh, then Buffalo, NY, from 1996 to 2010, and in Miami, FL since 2010. Their home was filled with friends and family and they treasure memories from cookouts in the summertime, New Year's Eve gatherings, and time spent together at the beach in Santa Rosa and on the slopes of the Cottonwood Canyons. Bill was a lover of golf, red wine, movies, Christmas decorations, cargo shorts, and butt-dials. He had a distaste for deadlines, slow drivers, air conditioning, and doing things the easy way. Bill's family will remember him most for his infectious confidence, irreverent sense of humor, weakness for sentimental movies, and tireless persistence in service of his wife, children, and patients. He had an effortless way of making the impossible seem possible. Bill will be sorely missed yet his presence always felt. His family invites readers to share memories of Bill by sending messages, photos, or videos to [bill.pelham.remembrance@gmail.com](mailto:bill.pelham.remembrance@gmail.com).

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the FIU Center for Children and Families, <https://ccf.fiu.edu/give>.



## Tribute Wall

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**Suzanne Johnson** posted:

my name is Suzanne Johnson and I was Bill's classmate at Stony Brook in Dan O'Leary's lab - just one year ahead of him. We kept in touch intermittently over the years. He ended up at FIU when I was at FSU. I was completely shocked to open my Sunday NYT and find Bill's obituary. I am so very sorry for his family, friends and colleagues. I remember many conversations about navigating interactions with Pharma - he was always smart, thoughtful and ethical. He had an absolutely remarkable influence on the field and the lives of so many children and families he helped. He certainly left this world a better place because of his efforts.

November 6 at 11:23 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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