



William R. (Bill) Korp

November 29, 1932 - June 25, 2021

Friday, June 25th, we lost a friend, a father, a grandfather, a husband, a brother, and a mentor. Bill was a man of valor, beloved by all who were touched by him. May his memory be a blessing.

Born in Lima, Ohio, Bill moved with his parents, Enid and Logan Korp, brother Richard and sister Marilyn to Orlando, Florida in 1933. Bill attended Kaley Elementary School; Cherokee Junior High School, where he was the Ninth Grade Class President; and Orlando High School where he was president of his Senior Class. He also played Varsity Basketball at OHS and was selected as Most Valuable Player in 1950. He graduated in 1950 with Honors and received a basketball scholarship to The University of Florida. At UF, he pledged Phi Delta Theta Fraternity and was a fervent member of Gator Nation his whole life.

After graduating from Florida, Bill was commissioned by the US Air Force. He was stationed in Japan during the Korean Conflict attaining the rank of First Lieutenant. He served as a navigator on reconnaissance missions and dealt in electronic countermeasures. He was proud of his military career, always believed in serving his country, and relished every aspect of his time in the Air Force. However, it also created in him a life-long aversion to standing in lines.

Upon leaving the Air Force in 1959, Bill returned to Florida, took advantage of

the GI Bill, and enrolled at the Stetson University College of Law in St Petersburg, Florida. He graduated in 1962. One evening in 1961, he tried to pick up Kate Page in The Stetson University Library. She was preoccupied that evening, but he was uniquely nice, respectful, and persistent. When he invited her to dinner and the ballet, she realized he might be special. After Kate returned from graduate work in France, they became close friends and then lovers and eventually married in 1963. In 1964, Bill, Kate, and Kate's dog "Snitzzy" moved to Sarasota. Bill often liked to comment that when he got married, he got a dog.

In Sarasota, Bill began his law practice, founding the firm Stinnett, Surfus, Korp & Payne. His partners in this first venture included Robert Stinnett, Jerry Surfus, and Howard Payne. The firm was eventually joined by Richard Nelson. Kate accepted a position teaching Art at Sarasota High School. Several years later, Bill established Korp & Wheeler, Attorneys at Law, in Venice, Florida. Kate accepted a position with Manatee Community College South Campus teaching Art and Art History & Appreciation. In 1971, their son William Alexander was born.

In 1979, Bill helped organize the law practice of Isphording, Korp, Payne & Muirhead. Bill, Roger Isphording, Howard Payne, and Bill Muirhead remained partners for almost 20 years. In 1998, Bill joined Abel, Band and then Lutz, Bobo, and Telfair in 2009. At these latter two firms, he became good friends with and mentor to Scott Gordon. In 2020, the Senior Counsel of Sarasota County bestowed upon Bill the prestigious Esteemed Colleague Award. He loved the practice of law and looked forward to going to the office every weekday, including the Monday before he checked himself into the hospital.

Bill was active in many Florida civic and political activities, and he served on the State Committee to Reelect President Gerald R. Ford. In 1976, Bill and Kate were invited by President Ford to a State Dinner at the White House

honoring the Emperor and Empress of Japan. He was State Chairman of the Young Republican Club from 1964 to 1966. He participated in the Sarasota County Republican Executive Committee (1966-1975), Time Sifters Archaeology Society, and the Gulf Coast Italian Culture Society (GCICS). He was president of these latter two organizations for many years.

The fine arts and performing arts were particular pleasures for Bill and he ardently supported local theatre and music, especially the John and Mabel Ringling Museum of Art, the Asolo Theatre, and the Sarasota Opera.

Bill's interests in art, history and archaeology led him around the world. Bill and Kate honeymooned amidst Mayan Pyramids and navigated treacherous Incan roads. Eventually, their son Alex joined them, and they travelled even further afield. The family safaried in East Africa, boated down the Nile, and walked in the footsteps of the ancient Greeks. In Europe, they toured countless castles and museums and indulged in their shared love of unique cuisines. Over the years, they often returned to Europe, and Bill and Kate's out-going, fun-loving and generous personalities attracted people who would become life-long friends everywhere they went. When his son married and had children of his own, the rental cars got bigger and so did the adventures. Of all his travels, the night spent at Abu Simbel, Egypt was his favorite.

Besides the Arts, Bill loved everything about the outdoors and was an avid birdwatcher. He enjoyed sailing, fishing, and all water sports. He especially loved restoring old boats, though perhaps they didn't always love him back. Among his favorites were his sailboat "Ricochet," named for its tendency of bouncing off docks, his fishing boat "Bad Companion," and his ski boat "Kate's Craft." One of his great joys was teaching his son and his son's friends to fish, camp, and water ski.

He delighted in entertaining and the parties he and Kate threw were legendary. He cultivated innumerable deep and meaningful friendships throughout the community, and many consider him a mentor or an honorary 'uncle.' He had a positive and profound impact on the lives of everyone he touched.

Most of all, he cherished his family and despite all his interests and commitments, he was always present. Never missing a game, performance, or exhibit, Bill always made time for those he loved. He treasured his role as husband, father, and grandfather.

Bill is survived by his wife Kate of 59 years, his son Alex, his daughter-in-law, Christina and his grandchildren, Brielle and Logan. He is also survived by Kate's goddaughter, Francesca Turner and her daughter Uli.

A celebration of life is planned for later in the summer.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Mayor's Feed the Hungry Program, the GCICS Scholarship Fund, or the Sarasota Opera.