



William L. Weiss

October 10, 2016

William L. Weiss was born in Big Run, Pennsylvania (Jefferson County) and attended grade and high school in that community, graduating in 1947. He then entered the engineering school at Penn State, receiving his Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering in 1951. Shortly after graduation, he was commissioned in the United States Air Force as a Communications Officer and served with the 155th Tactical Air Control Group in the United States and Europe during the Korean War period, 1951-1953.

Following his Air Force service, Bill (as he preferred to be called) began his career in the telecommunications industry, starting with assignments in the Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania. He became a vice president of Pennsylvania Bell in 1973 and successively became operating vice president of Wisconsin Telephone in 1976, president of Indiana Bell in 1978 and president of Illinois Bell in 1981. In 1982, the AT&T Company announced that it had reached a divestiture agreement with the United States Department of Justice, and Bill was named to head the regional telephone company being formed in the upper mid-west. On January 1, 1984, that company assumed operations under the name "Ameritech", and he served as its Chairman and Chief Executive Officer until his retirement on May 31, 1994. At that time, the "William L. Weiss Chair in Information and Communications Technology" was established in his honor at Penn State's College of Engineering by the Ameritech Foundation.

Bill was a retired director of Abbott Laboratories, Hospira, Merrill Lynch, Quaker Oats and Tenneco. He was a retired trustee of a number of institutions, including Penn State and its Hershey Medical Center, Northwestern University, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Chicago Lyric Opera. He was a past member of the boards of the Museum of Science and Industry (Chairman 1989-1992), the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (Chairman 1991-1994), and the Commercial Club of Chicago and the Chairman of its Civic Committee. In Sarasota, he served on the board of the Sarasota Memorial Healthcare Foundation.

During his lifetime, Bill received several awards including Penn State's Outstanding Engineering Alumnus and, also, the University's Distinguished Alumnus Award. He was awarded Honorary Doctor degrees from Purdue University, DePaul University and Knox College, and several civic honors including the National Humanitarian Award by the National Conference of Christians and Jews; Junior Achievement's Chicago Business Hall of Fame; Citizen of the Year by the City Club of Chicago; Distinguished Citizen Award from the Chicago Area Council, Boy Scouts of America; and the Civic Federation's Lyman J. Gage Founders Award for Outstanding Civic Achievement. Bill and his wife, Jo (Josephine), have been very active over the years in educational philanthropy, particularly through university scholarships for young men and women whose parents did not have the opportunity to attend college. Several hundred university and community college students received their degrees as a result of the support provided by the couple.

Bill is survived by his wife, Jo, of 65 years, three married children, daughter Susan (Kenneth) Miller of Lancaster, PA; son David (Dorene) of Holly Springs, NC; son Steven (Mitzi) of Wheaton, IL; five grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Despite his other achievements, he always considered his fine and accomplished family as the center of his pride.

A Memorial Service will be held at the First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota,
2050 Oak Street, at 11:00 AM on Monday, October 17, 2016.

Tribute Wall

SB

“ I am so sorry for your loss. In the bible we find hope and comfort. Ps. 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength. A help readily to be found in time of distress."

Shirley Blancheflower - October 21, 2016 at 12:00 AM

BT

“ Dear Jo, I am so sorry to learn of Bill's passing. I know how you feel as I lost Gloria to her Lord and Savior in April this year. Will you have any children & family near? Someone, and some interest to occupy your time are very desirable situations. I have our middle daughter, Diane, her at home. It would be very lonely being alone in the house, so I appreciate this. As a project I am completing Gloria's genealogy/historical book (We published my Thomas Book (paternal) and Murphy Book (maternal). And, keep doing things with your friends. Memories are good things to ponder. Bill and I had a fraternity relationship. Also, I remember our friendship while you lived in Harrisburg, and dinners with Chub and Lois Beatty (Chub passed away some years ago). God bless you, Jo. Bud Thomas

Bud Thomas - October 12, 2016 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ Bill was respected and liked by all who knew him, and will be remembered for his quiet, thoughtful manner and generosity to those who were less fortunate. Our thoughts are with Jo and the Weiss family. Sue Whelan Sarasota Memorial Healthcare Foundation

Sue Whelan - October 12, 2016 at 12:00 AM

WS

“ *Bill was a highly respected Brother of Phi Delta Theta and someone whom we recognized as a role model for the undergraduates.*

william n selvig - October 12, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DG

“ *We have very fond memories of Bill from our days at Penn State University. We send our deepest sympathies. David Gearhart
Chancellor Emeritus University of Arkansas Fayetteville, Arkansas*

David and Jane Gearhart - October 11, 2016 at 12:00 AM