



Charles William Shriner

October 25, 1920 - May 8, 2016

Bill Shriner, a member of The Greatest Generation who became a nationally-broadcast opera singer performing on top stages all over the world, died on May 8th 2016 in Bloomington, Indiana. Mr. Shriner was a Professor of Voice at Indiana University for thirty years until his retirement in 1985. Prior to his appointment to the Music School faculty he was a leading baritone with the New York City Opera, Fort Worth Civic Opera, Houston Grand Opera and the NBC Opera Theater. He sang leading roles in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *La Boheme*, the *Marriage of Figaro*, *Così fan Tutte*, *Carmen*, *Faust*, *Romeo et Juliette*, *Rape of Lucretia*, *Parsifal*, *The Valkyrie* and *Die Fledermaus*. He also appeared as MacHeath in Carnegie Hall in a revival of *The Beggars Opera*.

He made his concert debut at Times Hall in New York in 1951 and was signed by National Concert Artists Corporation to appear in Civic Music programs throughout America. For the next few years he sang concerts in forty-two of the then forty-eight states. In addition to Mr. Shriner's work in opera, he was one of the first of the so-called "serious singers" to move with ease to the light opera and musical theater stages. His appearances at Washington's Wolf Trap, St. Louis' Muni, and Kansas City's Starlight theater and others were noted for their vocal and histrionic brilliance. He sang leading roles in *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Roberta*, *Rio Rita*, *Naughty Marietta*, *New Moon*, *Desert Song*, and *Rose Marie*. He was considered a quintessential Billy Bigelow in *Carousel*, and was even briefly considered for the film version that ultimately

starred Gordon MacRae.

He was born in Houston, Texas on Oct. 25th, 1920, and began his musical studies in Texas. In 1938 he was part of the first graduating class from the then new Mirabeau B. LaMar High School. While he was in high school, he played violin, bass horn and trumpet. He was a graduate of Baylor University, earning a Bachelor of Music degree in 1942 and a Bachelor of Arts in 1943. During this time he married his first wife, Ms. Billie Guynes and had three children: Ms. Deborah Shriner Casati, Ms. Diana Shriner, and Mr. Charles William Shriner, Jr. While at Baylor, Mr. Shriner studied Voice with Robert Hopkins. He also studied with Paul Reimers, head of Voice Dept. of the Julliard School of Music, and Ms. Clytie Mundy, New York City, and was coached by Otto Herz, Thomas Martin, Desiree Defrere, Arpad Sandor and Felix Wolfes. Mr. Shriner performed under the direction of conductors Peter Hermann Adler, Eric Leinsdorf, Josef Rosenstock, Julius Rudel, and Edwin MacArthur. At Indiana University, his students included Mark Baker, Carole Farley, Roger Havranek, Joseph Levitt, Alan Montgomery, Jeffrey Springer, Kris Vail, and William Vessels.

Mr. Shriner was a veteran of World War II. Commissioned as an ensign in October, 1943, he was detailed on the U.S.S. Ancon, an amphibious command ship, aboard which the now famous battle recording by Blue Network (later known as ABC) broadcaster George Hicks was made during the D-Day invasion at Omaha Beach. Hicks interviewed Mr. Shriner while he was under fire as the twin battery gunnery officer. Hicks's broadcast also recorded Mr. Shriner shooting down the first German plane by a surface vessel on D-Day. When the first Mrs. Shriner opened the Fifth War Bond drive, the record and transcription of Hicks's broadcast were auctioned, raising more than \$100,000. Later, Mr. Shriner participated in the Okinawa invasion in the Pacific Theater. He resumed his musical career after his discharge in 1946.

In addition to his three children, three grandchildren (Anthony Casati, Christopher Casati and Aaron Gershon) and three great-grandchildren, Mr. Shriner is survived by his wife of 43 years, Christine Margaret Cook Shriner, whom he married in 1972.

A memorial service will be held at St. Marks United Methodist Church on Monday, August 15th at 11am.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the United Methodist Foundation of Indiana for the "Shriner Memorial Music Endowment."

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG **15**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

St Marks United Methodist Church
100 State Rd 46
Bloomington, IN 47408

Tribute Wall



“ *White Sympathy Floor Basket was purchased for the family of Charles William Shriner.*



August 09, 2016 at 01:07 PM

JS

“ Dearest Christine,

We're so sorry to hear of Bill's passing. Some of our greatest memories are of times spent with you and Bill in Bloomington. You guys took us sailing on Lake Monroe, had us over for dinner and drinks at your condo and then later your beautiful home, and all the times we went out to dinner at all the awesome restaurants around town. We'll never forget all the wonderful conversations we had, and all the warm memories the two of you shared with us. We are truly blessed to have known Bill and yourself for all these years.

Bonus fact for anyone who knew Bill: Bill could drink almost anyone under the table, and sharing scotch with him or one of his truly mind bending gin and tonics or martini's was the highlight of almost every visit! Bill's secret recipe for the world's greatest martini: pour several fingers of gin, and quickly open a bottle of vermouth on the other side of the room for just a few seconds for the driest of the dry martinis! He's probably making one for St. Peter right now!

Second bonus fact: Christine introduced us to the delicacy of Ouzo, and would sometimes bring us back aluminum decanters of it that she would collect while on field trips to Greece. It was amazing how you could add ice or cold water to it and it would turn from very clear to milky in about two seconds. No, not all of our memories are booze related, but some of good ones are!

Best of our love to you Christine. You're a cherished friend and mentor to us, and we'll miss sweet Bill quite a bit. As we had children and had moved away we couldn't spend as much time with you two as we would have liked, but we'll always fondly remember our visits together and look forward to future ones as well.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if there's anything we can do to help.

All our love,

John and Julie Shireley from Mooresville, Indiana

P.S. I still have some of the classic Meerschaum pipes Bill gave to me when he gave up smoking them, and they're sitting in our living room in a display case! We also have Bill's Christening gown from when he was a baby, carefully framed also in the main room. Why? I don't know, but because Bill is awesome! I'll see if I can share some pics.



John Shireley - August 07, 2016 at 02:31 PM



Christine is at Garden Villa in Bloomington and declining. I'm sure she would appreciate a visit if you are in the area. --Malcolm Webb

Malcolm Webb - October 25, 2019 at 08:20 AM

HZ

“ *Dear Christine,*

We are so sorry to learn Bill's pass. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Bill will remain in our hearts forever. Bill was so kind and always laughing when we got together.

Just came back from a long oversea trip. We will be attending the service.

Love,

Ping & Huitang

Huitang Zhou - August 02, 2016 at 12:01 PM

 Terry
Forkner

“ Dear Christine,

I am so sorry for your loss. No one can know another's pain, but after losing my wife of 34 years, I know how deeply it can hurt. My heart goes out to you.

Each of us can point to individuals who played a strong role in making us who we are. Bill did that for me, and many more. If we measure life by the difference we make in the lives of others, then Bill's was a good life.

Love,
Terry Forkner

Terry Forkner - July 24, 2016 at 10:24 AM

JU

“ Dear Christine,

I am so sorry for your loss. Bill was always so helpful and kind.

Take care,

James Uselman

James Uselman - July 11, 2016 at 06:52 PM

WM

“ Mr. Shriner was a kind, generous, funny, and talented performer & teacher. I thoroughly enjoyed studying with him, and accompanying in his studio. He gave me a wonderful basis for my performing career! He will be missed!

Wendy Miller May 22, 2016

Wendy Miller - May 22, 2016 at 08:33 PM

CS

Dear Wendy,

Thank you for your condolences and your support through this difficult time. Bill's Passing is going hard on me! I have Parkinson's Syndrome to boot. Everything is going to fast for me. Love, Christina

Christine Shriner - June 18, 2016 at 12:08 PM

MR

“ Dear Christine & Family,

It is with great sadness that I acknowledge the passing of a wonderful and talented human being. Bill was one of my favorite people. He would always visit me when he came into IU Human Resources, with a smile on his face, a hearty handshake, and his booming voice. He is remembered with great affection. God bless Bill and the family...

Maynard Raggio - May 19, 2016 at 12:47 PM

CS

Dear Maynard,

Thank you for your condolences and your support through this difficult time. Bill's Passing is going hard on me! I have Parkinson's Syndrome to boot. Everything is going to fast for me. Love, Christina

Christine Shriner - June 23, 2016 at 09:19 AM

MC

“ Christine,
*The Department of Classical Studies sends its sincere condolences.
What a wonderful life Bill lived!*

Matt Christ

Matt Christ - May 18, 2016 at 03:34 PM

CS

Dear Matt and Family;

Thank you for your condolences and your support through this difficult time. Bill's Passing is going hard on me! I have Parkinson's Syndrome to boot. Everything is going to fast for me. Love, Christina

Christine Shriner - June 23, 2016 at 09:12 AM

CS

Dear Matt and the Dept.,

Thank you for your condolences and your support through this difficult time. Bill's Passing is going hard on me! I have Parkinson's Syndrome to boot. Everything is going to fast for me. Love, Christina

Christine Shriner - June 23, 2016 at 09:22 AM

OK

“ *Dear Christine,*

Our deepest condolences for the passing of Bill. We were fortunate to have been touched by his hospitality, experienced his humor, and learned from his extraordinary life experiences. He was truly one of a kind.

Olga Kalentzidou and Stephen Ball

Olga Kalentzidou - May 16, 2016 at 12:57 PM

CS

Dear Olga and Stephen,

Thank you for your condolences and your support through this difficult time. Bill's Passing is going hard on me! I have Parkinson's Syndrome to boot. Everything is going to fast for me. Love, Christina

Christine Shriner - June 24, 2016 at 08:08 AM

JL

“ *Bill Shriner took me under his wing and gave me the tools to begin an international and national career as a singing artist. What I will remember most about Bill was his caring attitude, his generous spirit and his devotion to his faith and family. I was fortunate to get to know Bill's mother and even his father. Bill lived life to its fullest and his can-do attitude was infectious. My condolences to Christine, his loving and devoted wife, and to his children.*

Joseph Levitt - May 16, 2016 at 08:01 AM

CS

Dear Joe,

*Thank you for above. I appreciate it and know that Bill does as well.
Love, Christina*

Christine Shriner - June 18, 2016 at 12:13 PM

VP

“ *I'm among the St. Mark's youth group kids grateful that the Shriners were gracious enough to become our leaders for a couple of years in the '60s. They were very busy but took us on anyway, partly because their daughters, Debbie and Diana, were in the group. I also remember Bill singing at the dedication of the expanded St. Mark's -- the only time I ever had the pleasure of seeing him perform. He was a force, to be sure.*

Vicki Massy Palmer - May 16, 2016 at 06:53 AM

DH

“ *Dear Christine & Chuck,
My thoughts are with you.
Much love,
Davis Hart*

Davis Hart - May 15, 2016 at 03:46 PM

JA

“ I was fortunate enough to have studied voice with Mr. Shriner for a semester at IU. He stepped in to teach Mr. James King's studio when Mr. King took a short sabbatical. I really enjoyed studying with Bill. He was funny, knowledgeable, encouraging, attentive and kind. My condolences to all of his family. He was truly a fine fellow.

Jay Adams - May 15, 2016 at 11:24 AM

JK

“ My father, Carl Stewart, also from Bloomington, was Bill's friend when they served together on the USS Ancon in WWII. Dad passed away April 8, 2015, age 95. I've heard about Bill all my life, and he certainly was an accomplished fellow. I'm so glad the H-T picked up the story of D-Day and the recording (I did not know that existed). Thank you for sharing a part of history that our family needs to know about, too. I bet my Dad & Bill are enjoying a great reunion in Heaven. The greatest generation for so many reasons. We miss them. ---- Jeana (Stewart) Kapczynski, Ellettsville, IN

Jeana (Stewart) Kapczynski - May 15, 2016 at 08:30 AM

WH

“ Dear Christine,
We send our condolences to you on the loss of Bill. He was a kind and interesting human being, who, as we now learn from his obituary, also lived an extraordinary life.

Bill and Mary Beth Hansen

William Hansen - May 14, 2016 at 02:05 PM