



Frances Goins Wilhoit

May 22, 1941 - July 22, 2017

Frances Goins Wilhoit, 76
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Frances Goins Wilhoit, retired Indiana University library and journalism faculty member, died July 22 at Garden Villa-Bloomington of complications of Alzheimer's disease.

Born in Greensboro, NC, Frances grew up in Mebane, NC, and Martinsville, VA, where her father was an engineer for Western Electric and DuPont. At Drewry Mason High School, she wrote school news for the Martinsville Bulletin and was president of the student council in her senior year. Upon graduation in 1959, she was awarded a scholarship to study journalism. She attended Mary Washington College in Virginia for two years and then the School of Journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. While an undergraduate, she wrote for several newspapers and was named the outstanding senior woman in journalism. She received the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1963 and was selected for the Seminars Abroad Program to study in Europe, a highlight of which was spending a day with an East German family behind the Berlin Wall. After returning from international study, she married Cleve Wilhoit in August 1963. Upon completing a Master of Science degree in library science at UNC in 1967, she moved with her husband to Bloomington.

Upon arriving in Bloomington for the first time, Frances wept. She suddenly realized “that life now was all about husband Cleve and his career,” she wrote later. Soon, though, she discovered robust blueberry bushes loaded with berries next to the little bungalow on Jefferson Street, her new home. In an almost mystical way, those bushes became an inspiration for her to make Bloomington a “real” home and rekindled a characteristic intrepidity. She immersed herself in the history and traditions of the city and state to see how she might fit into them. And she met two remarkable women, Kathy Ruesink and Fenton Martin, who became inspiring and steadfast friends for the rest of her life. Later, two other strong Bloomington women, Sandra Churchill and Patricia Steele, also became important and loyal friends.

In 1968, Frances began part-time work at the Monroe County Public Library writing publicity and did special projects for the Indiana University Library. Active in the League of Women Voters, she researched and compiled their 1973 handbook, *Here Is Your Local Government*.

She became IU journalism librarian and assistant professor in 1975. Trevor Brown, retired School of Journalism dean, said that in just ten years Frances turned a “small reading room” into a major research library – endowed and re-named The Weil Journalism Library -- that was the “envy” of journalism programs everywhere.

During her career at IU, Frances Wilhoit served as collections development officer and personnel officer for the IU Libraries and curator of the Ernie Pyle memorabilia collection. She was chair of the IU-Bloomington Faculty Council’s budgetary affairs committee in 1979 -- a time of severe budgetary stress for the university -- and was lauded by many for her courage and leadership. In addition, she published research in major academic journals and spoke at scholarly meetings in the U.S. and abroad.

In the 1980s, Frances Wilhoit edited Journalism Abstracts, a compilation of summaries of graduate theses and dissertations. In 1990, with Eleanor Blum of the University of Illinois, Frances compiled and wrote Mass Media Bibliography: An Annotated Guide to Books and Journals for Research and Reference, which for two decades was a standard reference work.

Although a national leader, Frances' first loyalty was to Indiana. Of her many awards, the one she was proudest of was the John Cotton Dana Award given at the national conference of the American Library Association in 1989 to her and IU library colleague Sally Rausch for their Indiana Newspaper Project to archive and preserve Indiana newspapers.

In 1996, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication awarded Frances the Eleanor Blum Distinguished Service to Research Award, describing her "as the most highly respected communication librarian working anywhere in the world today." A year later she received the William Evans Jenkins Award, the highest award given to library faculty of Indiana University Libraries.

Early in her IU career, a 1976 feature story about Frances in the Herald-Times said, "While liberation per se is not part of her working vocabulary, she exemplifies a generation [of women] which is rising above stereotypes."

Career aside,

Frances' proudest accomplishment was her two children, Hannah and Peter, who remember her not only as a professional woman but also a "world-class" mother.

Daughter Hannah remembers that her mother "always dropped everything" when she needed mother-daughter time, which was often, particularly during

the teen years. And, Frances' delight at Hannah's graduation from the IU School of Nursing led to much celebrating. A poignant memory, though, is her mother's success in arranging and enjoying Hannah's wedding, despite the memory loss she already was experiencing.

Son Pete, a professional musician, treasures Frances' enthusiasm for his drumming that began in fourth grade at Elm Heights School. The sounds of the drums and rock musicians from the basement of home never bothered his mother, he recalls. And after a "Big Band" performance at the Musical Arts Center during his years at the Jacobs School of Music, Pete remembers Dean Henry Upper saying, "Oh Frances, you are such a stage-door mama!" To which she replied, "Yep."

One of Frances' dreams was to be a grandmother, but Alzheimer's disease largely robbed her of that. Of her four grandchildren, only the oldest, Isabel, 15, has the gift of remembering "dancing with grandma to the music of Uncle Pete's band, 'Fiction Plane'."

Stricken with Alzheimer's disease at age 58, Frances participated in four clinical studies at the IU Alzheimer Disease Center. In accordance with her wishes, Frances' final contribution to Alzheimer's research was as a subject in the Core Alzheimer's Study, in which an autopsy of her brain was performed, analyzed and correlated with the many previous medical tests done over the two decades of her disease.

Frances Goins Wilhoit is survived by her husband, Cleve Wilhoit, of Bloomington; daughter, Hannah Boston, and son-in-law, Mark Boston, of Cary, NC.; son, Peter Wilhoit, and daughter-in-law, Dr. Kathy DeStefano, of Guilford, CT; grandchildren: Isabel and Mara Boston of Cary, NC and Ethan and Sophia Wilhoit of Guilford, CT.

Frances also is survived by her mother, Doris Williams, of Greenville, NC; sisters, Carolyn Dolan of Gloucester Point, VA and Ruth Anna Toth and brother-in-law Bob Toth, of Ocracoke, NC; four brothers, Winslow Goins and sister-in-law Nancy Goins of Rocky Mount, NC, Robert (Bob) Goins and sister-in-law Helen Goins, of Kinston, NC, Joe Goins and sister-in-law Dr. Catherine Everett, of New Bern, NC, and Ted Goins and sister-in-law Julia Ann Goins, of Winston-Salem, NC.

Allen Funeral Home is in charge of cremation. A private memorial service will be held on Ocracoke Island, NC, where Frances first visited as a young girl with her maternal grandparents and spent many vacations with her family. Her grandchildren will distribute the ashes into the Pamlico Sound where she caught crabs and raked clams.

During the decade Frances was in the advanced Alzheimer's unit of Garden Villa, scores of excellent nurses and assistants cared for and loved her. They are remembered and appreciated deeply by her family.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Indiana University Foundation (P.O. Box 500, Bloomington, IN 47402) for the Frances Goins Wilhoit Student Research Awards, established in 1999 in her honor by the School of Journalism (now the IU Media School) and given annually.

Tribute Wall

RG

“ I remember the interview with Francis and Cleve as I was applying to watch their children. She wanted play time, help with homework and healthy snacks. It was a pleasure to ride my bike from 17th street to their home to work with Hannah and Peter. Thank you for a great start to a 40 year profession in Park and Recreation Administration - Outdoor Education Emphasis.

Renee

Renee M Gauchat - July 09, 2021 at 04:32 PM

KF

“ I light this candle for my former boss at the journalism library, You were an inspiration.



Karen Mondrush Fink - April 04, 2019 at 11:41 AM

JS

“ Frances....thank you for all you taught me in life while embracing my role as a caregiver. You will always be in my heart ❤️ and a part of my family. Cleve, I hope peace finds your heart swiftly! You are by far the most noble, devoted husband I have ever had the privilege of knowing. Your love for Frances was felt everyday we saw you at GV and I know she felt it every step of the way too.

Jennifer Scott - August 08, 2017 at 08:03 PM

TC

“ Terry Crowe lit a candle in memory of Frances Goins Wilhoit



Terry Crowe - August 08, 2017 at 07:18 PM

TC

“ Cleave, I am so sorry for your loss. But no one could have asked for a more loving husband. Your devotion to Frances has been unparalleled. No words can express my admiration and respect for you. You are a very special person and I pray for peace for you and your family. I hope you take comfort in knowing you have been the most ideal husband and friend to Frances, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health. You are my hero.

Terry Crowe - August 08, 2017 at 07:12 PM



“ Virginia Klyczek lit a candle in memory of Frances Goins Wilhoit



Virginia Klyczek - August 08, 2017 at 05:14 PM



Sorry for your loss, she was a joy to care for. I loved singing to her while she danced to it. My heart goes out you your family.

Virginia Klyczek - August 08, 2017 at 05:16 PM

DB

What a wonderful journalism librarian she was. I treasured her new book purchases lists she would send to Michigan. I remember Francis in her prime and often witnessed the devotion Cleve and Francis shared when they were together. Particularly when they ran together and supported one another by going to each other's races. What an inspiring relationship they had and the two children they reared so well. RIP, Francis.

Donald Allport Bird - March 05, 2020 at 11:24 PM



“ Amy Noe sent a virtual gift in memory of Frances Goins Wilhoit



Amy Noe - August 08, 2017 at 10:18 AM



“ Me and my mother will never forget wonderful Frances and family. Pleasure to care and know them all.

Amy Noe - August 08, 2017 at 10:17 AM



“ Oh what a smile.... Wonderful, warm, and welcoming are just a few of the ways I remember this remarkable lady. I never new her in her professional life. To read these memories from others and add to the great things I new about her brings tears to my eyes. The tears will quickly pass and I can smile and reflect on a life well lived.

Luke Boston - August 02, 2017 at 07:51 AM

SC

“*Persimmons. I will forever think of Frances Wilhoit when I see this beautiful fall fruit or inhale its lovely scent simmering on the stove. Frances introduced me to persimmons on a visit to the Wilhoit home on a beautiful fall Sunday when I was a graduate student in the J-School in the mid-seventies. She and Cleve were so generous in their hospitality to those of us struggling to make our way through graduate school and life as 20-somethings.*

I will never forget Cleve's words when I announced to him that my hometown sweetheart, Mike Conner, and I were going to marry while we were both starving graduate students. As my graduate adviser, Cleve could easily have cautioned me that we were asking for hard times ahead. Instead, he congratulated me, saying that he and Frances, who had already been married 10 years, loved each other more with each passing year.

I have thought of those prophetic words many times over the last 44 years of my marriage. Who knew back in the 70's that the love Frances and Cleve were building would become the gold-standard for measuring steadfastness to the sacred vow, "for better or for worse, for sickness and in health." The hardships of early marriage now seem inconsequential compared to their journey through one of life's toughest diagnoses.

Cleve and Frances were both highly accomplished in their professional roles, and I owe my career to Cleve, whose strength was fueled by Frances. But their greatest gift to me was demonstrating what real love is, " 'til death do us part." That love shall forever be represented in my life's memory book by those lovely persimmons cooking on Frances' stove.

Rest well, lovely Frances. May you soar with the angels and organize a world-class library for them.

And dear Cleve, may you smile as you remember the wonderful woman you loved more with every passing year.

I exalt you both.

Susan O'Keefe Conner

Susan O'Keefe Conner - August 01, 2017 at 11:29 PM

PS

“*Tom and I are so sad to hear of The passing of Frances. Our deepest condolences to Cleve, Peter and Hannah. You all are in our thoughts.*

Pat and Tom Stevens

Lebanon, Tennessee

(Parents of Jim Stevens, student at IU)



pat stevens - August 01, 2017 at 07:32 PM

“ Dearest Frances,

Our Bloomington world will feel empty without you, to paraphrase Diana Ross. Our regular returns to IU will now be without our traditional visits to you in the nursing home. Visits that so often over the many years brought your and our ever more separating worlds together through your soft smiles and subtle signs of recognition and appreciation.

So many memories.

The early seventies with little Hannah and Pete darting in and around the house while Cleve worked his miraculous ice cream machine. Cleve's sabbatical in Hilversum when you all immersed yourself so easily into the Dutch way of life. Our trip together in your Volvo 245 to Copenhagen and Stockholm when managing young Hannah and Pete on the road was a challenge you proved yourself quite up to. How much you would have liked to be able to extend your stay in Europe!

Back in Bloomington, your extreme make-over of Ernie Pyle Hall's Journalism library making it second to none. Your warm and sparkling hospitality every time we came back to IU.

And very special: your vacation with us in Hilversum when the twilight zone had already become part of your own world. The highlight: your rides on the back seat of Harold's tandem bike over the heath, through the woods, to the dairy farm and its young calves to whom you lost your heart upon first sight.

Above all, it is our memory of your Southern grandeur that never left you.

Rest in peace.

Clary and Harold de Bock, Hilversum, The Netherlands

Harold de Bock - August 01, 2017 at 06:03 AM

RH

“ We are saddened for the passing of our dear friend Francis, who had suffered for many years from a condition that the medical science could not help.

What a beautiful and memorable years we lived as neighbors and enjoyed raising our children together, the girls danced together with many happy hours of playing, reading and acting with Francis and all of us laughing and and cheering. What memories we had with the boys riding bicycles, swinging and sliding in the mud, not to mention having clifton street parade with Francis organising the outfits and serving homemade ice cream and lemonade. She jogged, walked to work then that special bicycle which didn't let go till the end of her riding time.

To Cleve, Hanna , Peter and their beautiful families, we are thinking of you and we know how each and every one feel. We send you our condolences and wish everyone good health and quick recovery from this big loss.

Thank you for posting Francis elegant photo, it is the one which we will continue to remember her with.

Bless you all,

The Haddawi

Chapel Hill

Rajih Haddawi - July 29, 2017 at 03:37 PM

“ My Dear Friend, Cleve,

What can one say at such moments in life, except I am so sad to hear of your loss. I know that those of us, the many of us, who love you and loved Frances would gladly, if we could, take some of the burden that is yours during this time of loss and grief. But this is such a very personal time for you and your family. The loss is really not transferable. Still, you should know that we have that wish.

I know time will heal. It always does. But in the meantime, the loss hurts much. You did, however, have wonderfully loving years, first those during times of joy and fulfillment, then those more trying but during which, I believe, Frances, somehow still knew you were lovingly there for her.

Now you will have memories. They will grow ever fonder and enrich your life. And I pray you will have peace as time passes and that those memories become sharper.

I will be forever grateful to you and Frances, along with Bonnie and, of course, Trevor, how welcoming you were when I first came to Bloomington and the Journalism School. Not everyone was so warm as you were, as supportive. You made my transition much easier. And Frances was always there with a smile ready to help.

I shall miss her, too, Cleve. She was a great and elegant and yet down-to-earth and ever-so-friendly person who left a mark on me.

I'm not sure if it is appropriate to bring in something operatic at this moment. But there is the chorus from Verdi's opera "Nabucco," about the Hebrew slaves in ancient Babylonia seeking to return to their homeland. For the subjugated Italians, that chorus became a national anthem which, at Verdi's funeral decades later, 300,000 people sang in the streets of Milan, along with a 900-voice chorus led by Arturo Toscanini, to honor him. The words, in English, to that chorus begin: "Fly, O thought, on golden wings." In a way, Frances

has been a prisoner during these late years. Now, she is in your thoughts, given the freedom to fly away on golden wings.

With warmest regards,

Peter

Peter Jacobit - July 29, 2017 at 11:44 AM

DL

“ *With condolences, respect, and best wishes to Dr. Wilhoit and his family at this difficult time in their lives.*

Dalton Lancaster

Dalton Lancaster - July 27, 2017 at 05:18 PM

DL

“ *With condolences, understanding, respect, and best wishes to Dr. Wilhoit and his family at this difficult time in their lives.*

Dalton Lancaster

Dalton Lancaster - July 27, 2017 at 03:45 PM

BG

“ *My condolences dear Cleve (and family). In the few years I was lucky enough to be her colleague she went out of her way to help me settle into the library, the School, and our town. Memories of her are plenty—and all are inspiring. Wishing you quality time with close friends and family to celebrate and remember Frances. Big virtual embrace.*

Betsi Grabe - July 27, 2017 at 03:27 PM

GW

“ *The world seems a little smaller now that Frances is no longer in it. I admired her outstanding career as the founding librarian of the School of Journalism library in Ernie Pyle Hall, but feel that her greatest accomplishment (and the one that I tried to emulate) was with her family – beloved husband Cleve and children Hannah and Peter. It was so fortunate for all of you to be with Frances at the time of her passing. You provided steadfast love and support through the years that she needed you in the same way that she supported all of you in earlier years. I know that you will keep her legacy alive in the memories that you share within the family and especially with her grandchildren. Our love and thoughts are with you. Gail Weaver*

Gail Weaver - July 27, 2017 at 10:40 AM

HT

“ *Frances (and Cleve) were wonderful, valued colleagues throughout my time at IU Bloomington. Although I was in (the former Department of) Telecommunications, my Ph.D. was in Journalism and Mass Communication and even during my Doctoral studies, I knew of both of them. For many years, I was the "development" person who worked with Frances to acquire materials related to Telecommunications -- so we spent a fair amount of time together, not only discussing acquisitions but also, in many ways, feeling our way through IU and Bloomington. Her passing, of course, is sad -- but I have many fond memories of a wonderful person. My condolences to all of the family and to other friends and colleagues. Herb Terry*

Herb Terry - July 26, 2017 at 11:47 AM

DL

“ Dear Cleve and family,
My heart is broken for you and yours even though it was to be. I think of all the wonderful things that you, Cleve, did for Frances. Watching you out by the fish pond feeding and singing to her is a memory I will never forget. I look forward to seeing and spending time with you one day again. God Bless you and your wonderful family and peace be with you. Dick Leyda

Dr. Richard Leyda - July 26, 2017 at 06:54 AM

EW

“ Dear Cleve, Pete, and Hannah,
The picture published in the HT of Frances running with young Rachel and Hannah is famous in our family! I remember her wonderful smile. What an inspiring obituary. We are thinking of you, and wish you all peace.

Eva Wailes

Eva Wailes - July 25, 2017 at 10:59 PM

MP

“ To Frances' much loved family, I send my sincere condolences. I worked with Frances at the IU Libraries for a number of years. She told wonderful stories of her life growing up in Virginia and in North Carolina. We all enjoyed her so much! The things I remember most clearly are Frances' sensitivity to others, her courage in saying what everyone thought but could not bring ourselves to say out loud, her clear-eyed point of view, and her true graciousness. Even when she was first fighting this terrible disease and trying to continue to do the work she loved, Frances kept a smile on her face and asked for technological ways to help her continue the good fight. I will certainly remember her. --Mary Pagliero Popp

Mary Pagliero Popp - July 25, 2017 at 09:12 PM

VP

“ Dear Cleve,

Many fine people got their start in a bungalow on Jefferson St., including you, Frances ...and me. You were my only favorite professor (Public Opinion -- the summer man landed on the moon). Oddly enough, my most distinct visual memory is of you carrying your firstborn up the Ernie Pyle stairs in the carrier -- your briefcase in your other hand -- headed toward the library. My sincere condolences in the loss of your spirited companion in life.

Vicki Massy Palmer

Vicki Massy Palmer - July 25, 2017 at 03:01 PM

DW

“ Dear Cleve, Hannah and Peter,

I remember that Frances was always so helpful and knowledgeable in discussing library resources with my research methods class each fall, and in helping me find references for my own research. We were all so lucky to have the Journalism Library that she built. I have always thought that it was so unfair and such a shame that she was stricken with this terrible disease, especially given her healthy lifestyle. I hope the memories of the first 30 years in Bloomington will comfort you all in this time of such great loss.

Dave Weaver

Dave Weaver - July 25, 2017 at 12:37 PM

LB

“ *Cleve and family,
I remember Frances so fondly. She was a wonderful person who
contributed to IU and the field. My thoughts are with you.*
Lee Becker

Lee Becker - July 25, 2017 at 12:24 PM

DH

“ *Andy and I are very sorry to hear of your loss. We know Frances'
final years were a struggle for everyone. May she rest in peace and
her family be comforted by their happy memories of their lives
together. -- Dee and Andy Hall*

Dee J. Hall - July 25, 2017 at 11:33 AM

SD

“ *I remember Frances as a powerhouse who managed to create both
a wonderful family structure and a great career. She was ever
curious and willing to take risks. I have missed her for years but now
must acknowledge her true absence. Condolences to her entire
family.*

Sharon Dunwoody

Sharon Dunwoody - July 25, 2017 at 11:11 AM

MD

“ Dear Cleve and family:

As a graduate student at IU between 1987 and 1994, I will always remember my many interactions with Frances--to suggest monographs and serials for the then Journalism Library, to defend our collection in the face of budget cuts, to do research, to serve on the advisory board, to meet with Sage representatives.... Frances was a very special person and had a huge impact on me at IU. She touched the lives of many students and faculty who routinely visited the Journalism Library. I want you to remember her impact forever. One of my best memories was her presence at one of my conference presentations that was scheduled early morning. Of course, there was virtually no one in attendance, but she was there right in the middle of the room, and I was able to make eye contact with her during the presentation.

Frances, we will miss you dearly. Thank you for being there for me.

Michel Dupagne

Michel Dupagne - July 25, 2017 at 09:20 AM

VM

“ Dear Cleve and family.

What an incredibly accomplished woman Frances was! You and your family are in our thoughts.

With sympathy, Virginia and Michael Metzger

virginia metzger - July 25, 2017 at 07:45 AM

LS

“ Dear Pete and Family,

Please accept my condolences for the loss of your mother. You are in my thoughts at this difficult time.

Linda (Luca) Scott - July 25, 2017 at 06:57 AM

CN

“ Frances was a wizard with detail, and an excellent library maestro. She also valued her family -- wonderful people all. Always gracious and welcoming, I know she leaves smiles on the faces of those who knew her, and I'm among the many who will always miss her. My heart and thoughts go to Cleve and the kids and their kids! Cathi Norton

Cathi Norton - July 25, 2017 at 05:42 AM

JR

“ I am so thankful for the life of my unofficial Aunt, and for her family. She was quite a runner, too! I remember one hot, humid early-80s mid-day race when I tried to keep but just couldn't... her legs and arms just kept on pumping along, measuring that distance with fluid motion and perseverance.

Jennifer Ruesink - July 24, 2017 at 03:26 PM

CP

“ A gracious colleague--her smile lit up our lives.

Carol Polsgrove - July 24, 2017 at 07:22 AM

HS

“ Thank you for this fine obituary. I hadn't known of many of Frances's accomplishments, but they barely surprise me. In my experience, Frances was a force of insight and grace.

I will be thinking of you, Cleve and Hannah and Pete, in the days ahead. May you take much comfort from all the memories.

Holly Stocking - July 24, 2017 at 07:02 AM