



## Gates Kennedy Agnew

December 28, 1935 - February 25, 2023

Gates Kennedy Agnew, 87, died peacefully at home on February 25, 2023, in the company of his beloved wife of 64 years, Patricia (Pat), close family members, and their dear cat, Cleo.

Gates is survived by his two brothers and a sister, Bill (Penny), Hewes (Susan), and Zanne; his brothers-in-law and sister-in-law, Matthew (Mary), Roger, and Ruth; his beloved children, Emily (Duke), Elizabeth, Ken (Mrill), and Andrew (Maia); grandchildren Emlyn, Isaiah, Miranda, Quinn, and Claire; and extended family members. Family was his greatest love. He was keenly interested in and involved with his children, and reveled in the controlled chaos of family life. Gates both instilled a love of literature, music, and the great outdoors in his children, and he embraced new ideas and pursuits inspired by them. He also had a gift for deep and lasting friendships.

The second son of Franklin Ernest Agnew, Jr. and Suzanne Kohlsaag Agnew, Gates was born and grew up in St. Louis. He attended John Burroughs School, where he distinguished himself as a student and an athlete. Gates graduated from Princeton University in 1957. He met Pat, a Wellesley student and Princeton "townie," on a blind date. They spent the first year of their marriage in Hawaii, where Gates was teaching at Punahou School. Gates completed his Ph.D. at Stanford University and joined the Department of English at Indiana University Bloomington in 1962. After receiving tenure, he

earned a Master's in Social Work and left teaching to work in the Partial Hospitalization Program at the South-Central Community Mental Health Center. Gates found his work with clients deeply rewarding and particularly valued being part of a therapy team.

In Bloomington, Gates and Pat nurtured deep and broad community connections. They also enjoyed international travel with family and friends including a sabbatical year in London with all four children, and later trips to New Zealand, Japan, Egypt, Greece, Ireland, Mexico, and Peru. Gates and Pat hiked, cycled, and attended meditation and spiritual retreats together. They also traveled to concerts, graduations, and other special occasions involving their children, grandchildren, and close friends.

Gates was a profoundly spiritual person. He was deeply and visibly moved by sacred and secular music, literature, poetry, and the plays of Shakespeare. He loved the Beautiful Game, and enjoyed attending IU soccer games and viewing international matches aided and abetted by his sons, who texted game commentary on the side. He and Pat enjoyed countless musical and theater events at IU and made frequent pilgrimages to the Stratford Festival in Canada.

With Pat, Gates was a faithful member of Trinity Episcopal Church for nearly 60 years. He sang in the Trinity choir, arriving in a wheelchair when he could no longer walk into the church. Throughout his life, Gates quietly served others in countless ways, including years of volunteer work with the Community Kitchen and the Interfaith Winter Shelter. His frailty at the end distressed him because it cost him his independence, but even more because it compromised his ability to be helpful. Still, he remained a mentor to many who were drawn to his compassion, understanding, and gentle wit.

Gates shared Pat's love for the family cottage in Ontario, Canada. With the

aging of Pat's parents, who built the cabin in 1960, Gates led the effort for two decades to keep the cottage in repair. One of his keenest regrets as he lost his strength in the past few years was not getting up to the cottage one last time.

Gates endured a number of prolonged clinical depressions during his adult life. Following a final episode in 2017, he recovered a sense of inner peace and contentment which stayed with him until his death. He particularly loved his routines with Pat, which included reading together, daily devotional practices, and afternoon lattes with home-baked biscotti.

Were he here, Gates would join the family in expressing deepest gratitude to the care team, led by Koshie Lamptey, and to Nurse Jim and all the staff of IU Health Bloomington Hospice, who made it possible for him to stay at home with Pat (and Cleo) until the end. Thank you all.

Dad, you were and are deeply loved. Life won't be the same without your steady and loving support, your sweet smile, your sly wit, and your keen appreciation of a homemade dessert. Fortunately, we are told, they have excellent pie in the sky.

Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 25 at Trinity Episcopal Church in Bloomington, followed by a reception in the Great Hall. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Trinity Episcopal Church or to the Community Kitchen of Monroe County.

Allen Funeral Home and Crematory have been entrusted with arrangements. Online condolences, photos and memories may be shared with family and friends at [www.allencares.com](http://www.allencares.com).

# Previous Events

## Funeral Service

MAR **25**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Trinity Episcopal Church  
111 S Grant St  
Bloomington, IN 47408-4031  
(812) 336-4466

# Tribute Wall

BB

“Gates was my friend, confidant and counselor who guided me through difficult times as I struggled to live in Bloomington. He nurtured my creative spirit, all the while challenging me to acknowledge my own responsibilities. Gates was kind, patient, a gentle spirit. His greatest achievement was inviting me to Trinity, where I shared his spiritual life. He and Pat attended my musical and theatrical productions, and later commissioned me to landscape their house. They were two of my best clients ever, and I sorely miss him and his wry smile.

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**Bob Baird** - March 25, 2023 at 09:27 PM

JP

“Gates and I were classmates at Princeton. We never met (I was an engineering student at the time) but many years later I called to seek his advice about a serious family issue in Bloomington. His advice was helpful and may have been life-saving; I have always been grateful for it. I offer my heartfelt condolences to his family and to their many friends everywhere.

*Jim Perry '57*

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**Jim Perry** - March 21, 2023 at 05:58 PM

JD

*I have wonderful memories of Gates, as my group leader. He taught me that a father is more than just a body in the home. He taught me how a father is suppose to be there. His lessons will always be with me.*

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**Jennifer Dustin** - March 24, 2023 at 12:31 PM

JJ

“ I seriously cannot find the right words to express my deep love for Gates. He was one of the oldest and dearest friends that I have ever had during my lifetime. He and I used to have lunch together every week or 10 days. We once went down to St. Meinrad’s Archabbey in southern Indiana for had a prayerful retreat together, with lectio divina and meditation. He shared his wisdom with me so many times when I was having an emotional problem. I will miss him more than I can say. RIP Gates. You will live in my heart as long as I live.

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**John Wm Johnson** - March 15, 2023 at 01:01 PM

AM

“ Pat, sending you and all your family warm thoughts at this time. Gates touched so many lives. Tonia Matthew

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**Antonia Matthew** - March 08, 2023 at 10:59 AM

RD

“ When I first began the serious study of literature in 1965, I was fortunate to have landed by chance in Gates Agnew’s Chaucer class at Indiana University. I’m now a retired Professor of English myself, and Gates Agnew stands out as a memorable inspiration in my education. Thank you for your guidance.

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**Richard Davis** - March 07, 2023 at 05:02 PM

AS

“ Dear Pat,  
David and I send you and your family our deepest sympathy for the loss of Gates. We remember so clearly his kind smile and gift for friendship, as well as his selfless service and devotion to Trinity and the choir. We recall with pleasure his love of literature and music, and our joy when we encountered you both unexpectedly at the Stratford Festival in Ontario and shared our mutual love of Shakespeare.  
May you and all your family find comfort in your memories of happy times spent together.  
Affectionately,  
Anne Sampson

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**Anne T Sampson** - March 04, 2023 at 07:20 PM

BB

“ Gates was a wonderful person to know - always so friendly and welcoming to our family at Trinity Episcopal Church. He mentored our son, Nick, through the confirmation process and continued this even after the process was finished. He would pick Nick up at our house and go for ice cream and I remember how grateful I was to have such a wise and gentle person take an interest in my teenage son. Thank you Gates and Rest in Peace.

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**Betsy Birch** - March 03, 2023 at 07:14 PM

KH

“ I was one of the clients in the Partial Hospitalization Program, 3 decades ago Gates was one of the most thoughtful and caring therapists. Such a wonderful role model! And I can share this amusing thought with his family that not one of us, in this long group could fathom he was NOT married to Colleen Cleary, our Group Mother, Gates was the Group Dad. What a fabulous life. He made a huge difference on so many levels. I wish you all peace!

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**Kathleen Marie Hirons** - March 03, 2023 at 05:44 PM

JR

*I too was a client in that program long ago, and your comment brought back fond memories of the experience and Gates' inspiring presence. From time to time I remember the clog dancing, and the time Gates taught me it was okay for me to defend myself when hit with a foam bat! He and the group made such an impression that for decades I have periodically looked him up . . . knowing of course that one day I would find a notice like this that he has left us.*

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**John Rogers** - June 02, 2023 at 05:54 PM

DA

*“ As I read through the obituary I am reminded of why I will forever carry Uncle Gates in a special place in my heart - he epitomized kindness, curiosity and compassion. During our visits in Canada he often listened with such peaceful intent that his calming presence allowed me to unexpectedly open up with my worries or confusions. Then, quietly, his minimal, well-chosen comments served as a salve to the distress I shared. These are my most cherished memories. He was truly trustworthy and deeply caring, and I will miss him very much. He was a lovely man with an easy smile, wise words and gentle eyes, and I will continue to carry his name with honor. Deborah Gates Agnew*

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**Deborah Agnew** - March 03, 2023 at 05:20 PM

KE

*“ Gates was a wonderful man and a great mentor to my oldest son Nick in the Episcopal church. Nick was recently promoted to Major in the US Army JAG Corps. Gates will be missed.*

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**Ken** - March 03, 2023 at 09:22 AM

LM

*Hello Pat and family.*

*Just to say that Bee and I much enjoyed Gates's company, socially and professionally. You and he made the perfect couple.*

*As I a new assistant professor at IU in 1964, I found Gates to be a warm and welcoming faculty member who was a perfect mentor. Indeed you and Gates confirmed the wisdom of my (and Bee's) decision to move to Bloomington.*

*We send our good wishes along with our gratitude for having known the Bloomington Agnews.*

*Fondly, Lew and Bee*

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**Lew and Bee Miller** - March 10, 2023 at 10:27 AM

KK

*Dear Pat and all the Agnew family,*

*I am so sorry for your great loss.*

*Gates simply had a way about him and in his presence, his gentleness, kindness, intelligence, and quietness came through always with grace. He touched many peoples lives and will be both remembered and missed.*

*Kristin Kimmell*

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**Kristin Kimmell** - March 18, 2023 at 02:56 PM