



William J. "Bill" Gress

April 11, 1935 - September 15, 2021

William J. "Bill" Gress, 86, of Bloomington passed away peacefully on Wednesday, Sept. 15, 2021 at the IU Health Bloomington Hospital. His wife, Robin, was at his side.

He was born on April 11, 1935 in Huntingburg, Indiana, the son of Edgar J. and Elvera M. (Fleck) Gress. Bill attended high school in Washington, D.C. and received a Bachelor of Science degree from Marquette University in Milwaukee in 1957. He later earned a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri at Columbia. He married Robin on July 19, 1986 in San Marino, California, and the two celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary in July.

Bill became interested in journalism as a young man and chose Marquette because of its journalism curriculum, but only lasted six months in the program before discovering that what he really wanted to concentrate on was liberal arts, literature and theology. He changed his majors.

After graduating, he went to work as a reporter and editor for several small newspapers, later returning to school to earn his master's degree before joining the staff of the now-defunct St. Louis Globe Democrat in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1978, he was hired by the Los Angeles Times where he remained for 18 years and where he met Robin. He loved the newspaper business but

in looking back always said he was grateful to have been a part of it when, in his words, news was news and opinion was opinion. He was a good reporter, an even better editor and he had a fine eye for detail and nuance.

He was a devoted news junkie his entire life, and his computer desktop was jammed with shortcuts to big and small news outlets across the country. The first thing he did every morning was grab the New York Times to pore over every page. He had little faith in most televised news, although he would watch PBS without fail and talk back furiously at anyone with whom he disagreed. His blood ran democratic blue--in all senses of the word--and he had a lot to say in recent years as he watched events unfold in the country. He was not much given to small talk, but introduce a topic of substance--politics, current events, science, books, great food, gardening--and he was all attention.

To appreciate his library was to appreciate the man. A voracious reader and collector, his shelves were filled with books on American history, the history of the early church, the writings of Shakespeare, prehistoric archeology and paleontology, and the entire collection of Patrick O'Brian's Aubrey/Maturin novels. An intrepid traveler, he had also collected hundreds of maps that fill countless bins and baskets.

The pride and joys of his life were his beloved Airedale Terriers and the many shelter dogs that came to live with the family over 35 years. The latest, Duncan the Legendary Prince, keenly misses him.

But at the heart of Bill's being was his faith. He was born into a devout Catholic family and raised in a strong Catholic community. He attended Catholic schools all of his life. He closely followed all developments in the modern church and believed strongly in the many changes brought about by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican. He was a member of St. Paul

Catholic Center and a former member of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church where he served on the Parish Council.

Bill is survived by his wife, Robin Roy Gress of Bloomington, and many extended family members in Dubois County.

A funeral mass will be held at 11:00 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 23, 2021 at St. Paul Catholic Center, with Father Dennis Woerter, O.P., officiating. Visitation will take place from 9:30 a.m. to service time at the center, 1413 E. 17th St., Bloomington, Indiana 47408. Cremation Rites have been accorded.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to charitable funds that the Gresses have established at the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County. One is the Gress Bloomington Catholic Charities Endowment Fund, and the other is the Gress Access to Opportunity Fund whose goal is to enhance educational opportunities for young at-risk children.

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.

Cemetery Details

Clear Creek Cemetery

W Church Lane
Bloomington, IN 47403

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 23. 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Paul's Catholic Center
1413 East 17th Street
Bloomington, IN 47408

Mass of Christian Burial

SEP 23. 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Paul's Catholic Center
1413 East 17th Street
Bloomington, IN 47408

Tribute Wall

CR

“ Robin, I wanted to express my sincere sympathy to you on Bill's passing.
It was a pleasure working with you both on the sale of Bill's Mother's house.
Kitty Recker (RET)
FC Tucker Realty
Jasper

Catherine Recker - September 26, 2021 at 02:16 PM

AA

“ Bill made me feel welcome and appreciated from the first day I met him at church. I will never forget that kindness and interest. 💜

April Armstrong - September 22, 2021 at 09:28 PM

BN

“ Robin, so sorry to hear this news. You are in my prayers



Becki Neiswanger - September 21, 2021 at 11:56 AM

KJ

“ Kristin Shawn and Jessica purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of William J. "Bill" Gress.



Kristin Shawn and Jessica - September 20, 2021 at 10:25 AM

KR

“ *Shawn, Jessica and I consider Bill family and we are so sad to hear of his passing. the world is emptier with him gone. Such a lover of all things garden, we loved working with him and with Robin on their ever-changing yard! He will be sorely missed, but he will always be with us in our hearts. Love and hugs to Robin - we are here for you - your garden family.*

Kristin Rust - September 20, 2021 at 10:22 AM