



## William R. Black

June 8, 1942 - October 15, 2013

William R. Black, Age 71, of Bloomington IN., Indiana University Professor Emeritus, died suddenly in his home early Tuesday morning due to complications from cancer. He was born June 8, 1942, in Brownsville Pennsylvania, and was the son of Thomas D. and Dorothy (Hileman) Black. He received his BS degree from California State College in 1964 and M.A. (1966) and his PhD. (1969) in Geography from the University of Iowa. He joined the faculty of the Department of Geography, at Indiana University in 1969. He was given a joint appointment to the School of Public and Environmental Affairs in 1973. He was promoted to Professor of Geography and Public and Environmental Affairs in 1977. During his tenure at Indiana University he served as the director of Center for Urban Affairs (1973-1973) and the director of the Center for Urban and Regional Analysis (1973-1978). He was also the Chairman of the Department of Geography from 1985-1989 and again from 2003-2007. During his career he also was on the faculty of Miami University in Oxford Ohio (1968-1968) and Purdue University (1973).

He was technical director of the transit study that led to the creation of the Bloomington Transit in 1972. In 1973 he became involved in the railroad reorganization following the bankruptcy of several national railroads. He served at

the Director of Rail Planning for the State of Indiana (1974-1975). During a leave of absence from the university he served in the activation task force of the Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) in Philadelphia (1975-1976). He was also named Director of the Indiana Department of Transportation and served on the Transportation Coordinating Board in 1980.

He was active in the Association of American Geographers (AAG) and the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the National Research Council (NRC). He chaired the Transport Geography Specialty Group of the AAG (1980-1982) and the Social and Economic Factors Committee of the TRB (1996-2002). He was the editor of the journal *Regional Science Perspectives* (1972-1973) and the *Journal of Transport Geography* (1995-1998). He served on several national conference and project panels during his career.

Black was the recipient of the Meritorious Achievement Award from California State College in 1980. He was also named a Sagamore of the Wabash for the Public Service to the State of Indiana by Governor Otis R. Bowen in 1980. He received the AAG Edward L. Ullman award in 2000. He also received a Distinguished Service Award from the TRB/ NRC in 2002 and was named an Emeritus member of the organization in 2005.

During his career at Indiana University he directed more than 20 transportation research projects. Black was the author of more 200 research papers and reports. He was coauthor of two books and coeditor of *Social Change and Sustainable Transportation* (2002). He was the author of 4 books: *Railroad for Rent*, a study of the federal local rail service assistance act (1986), *Transportation: A Geographical Analysis*, a textbook in the field of transport geography (2003), *Sustainable Transport: Problems and Solutions* (2010) ; *Dispatches from the*

World, The Life of Percival Phillips, War Correspondent (2012), a biography of Percival Phillips; and Philander Chase Knox, not yet published.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Donna Frazzitta Black and three children: Tracy L. Black (Mark Estelle) of San Diego, California; Richard J. Black (Tracy Gramza) of Arlington Heights, Illinois and Eric T. Black (Alana Siniard) of Bloomington, Indiana. He is also survived by one sister, Nancy J. Bennett of Brownsville Pennsylvania, a half-sister, Judy Young of Butler, Pennsylvania and eight grandchildren: Aidan B. Estelle and Mackenzie J.B. Estelle of San Diego, California; Sr. Airman Shaun M. Black, USAF Holloman AFB; Thomas A. Black and Ryan J. Black of Bloomington, Indiana; and Natalie P. Black, Sara E. Black and Leah A. Black of Arlington Heights, Illinois; sister in law Marie Moninger of Silver Springs, Maryland and several nephews and nieces.

At the request of the deceased there will be no viewing or memorial service. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made in his name to one of the following:

IU Health Proton Therapy Center

Pediatric Goodwill Fund

ATTN: Marketing and Development<sup>[1]</sup> 2425 N Milo B Sampson

Lane<sup>[SEP]</sup> Bloomington, IN 47408-1398

or

Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation

Bloomington Hospital Foundation

PO Box 1149

Bloomington IN 47402

Allen Funeral Home 4155 South Old Highway 37 is handling the arrangements and online condolences may be sent to the family at [www.allenfuneralhome](http://www.allenfuneralhome).

# Tribute Wall

JA

“ I would like to express my sincere condolences on the passing of your Prof. William Black.

*Although I did not know him well, I know that he was a respected Geography Professor in the Geography community and his own profession.*

*I did not forget for his help before 3 or 4 years when I asked him about geography matters, he very quick replied to me and send a lot of his geography works.*

*With deepest sympathy,  
Jamal al-Mehairi Phd*

---

jamal al-mehairi - October 26, 2015 at 04:08 PM

GA

“ I am very sorry to hear about Bill's passing. Please extend my sincere condolences to Donna and her family. Bill was my PhD advisor at IU in the mid-1990s and I assisted him on one of his many research projects. I looked forward to working and visiting with him each day. He was the primary influence on my development in the field, during and beyond grad school. I'll miss his collegiality, his curiosity, and his sense of humor.

---

Garth Banninga - October 26, 2015 at 04:08 PM

DI

“ *My thoughts go out to the family of Bill Black. I was saddened to hear of his loss. Bill was the reason that Steve attended IU. He was a good friend of Steve and I and started Steve's career with the railroad. I was comforted by Bill coming to Virginia Beach when Steve died and always looked forward to visiting with Bill and Donna when I was in Bloomington.*

---

**Dianne Eisenach** - October 26, 2015 at 04:08 PM

JA

“ *Very sorry to hear of the passing of Bill Black, beloved of the Black and Estelle families and such a contributor to intellectual life and to the community at large. Our thoughts & prayers go out to you.*

---

**Jane Walter** - October 26, 2015 at 04:08 PM

GE

“ My thoughts and prayers go to Bill Black's family at the time of his lost. I first met Bill at a transportation club meeting in 1970, and Les Waters introduced us. We became friends almost immediately, and we shared the pleasure of each others company with good talk and good friendship. We exchanged birthday and Christmas gifts for many years. Bill was always there to talk to in the time of need, such as the passing of my wife and daughter. For years we met every Saturday morning on the edge of campus in the house in which I had an office. Bill would bring pastry, and I made coffee. I remember he once showed up at my house in his car; the car had problems and would only operate backward. He drove some distance to my house for help; it took a while to get over that one. When Frank McCluskey was elected mayor, he promised to create a transit system for Bloomington. Bill, I, and Ed Colby planned the system. We spent a Sunday trying out the routes, with me driving the 1955 Buick, Ed in front with a map we had torn from a phone book, and Bill in the backseat to keep us honest. Bill almost passed out from exhaust fumes. We attended an exciting transportation research board meeting in Northern Virginia at a facility apparently used by the CIA. We mistakenly barged into a meeting, and were hustled out quickly. There were no telephones, radio, or television in the rooms. In the Lobby there were newspapers available, and we saw the news of the dreadful tornadoes that hit Indiana, in April 1974. We took turns calling our wives to see if there was damage in Bloomington. I enjoyed Bill's company for over 40 years and had a great deal of admiration for his talent, sense of humor, and his wonderful friendship.

---

**George Smerk** - October 26, 2015 at 04:08 PM

CH

“ So sorry for your loss. (Friend of Nancy's)

---

**Cheryl Adams** - October 26, 2015 at 04:08 PM

EL

“ Please accept my sincere condolences on Bill's passing. It is always too soon to lose a loved one. I knew Bill, and enjoyed his conversation, as a treasured colleague and friend of my late husband John Odland.

*I very much appreciated Bill's reminiscences of John at the departmental memorial gathering after John's death in 2009. When Bill spoke, I gained a new insight into John's earlier professional life and realized the depth of Bill's and John's mutual respect and affection. It is a comfort to me even now to remember Bill's words.*

*With warm regards,  
Eliza Steelwater*

---

**Eliza Steelwater** - October 26, 2015 at 04:08 PM