



William Penn Haney Stevens Jr.

March 16, 1938 - September 13, 2020

William Penn Haney Stevens, Jr., 82, whose values and aspirations were deeply rooted in the soil and trees of his beloved Oak Ridge home - Glenagape, died on September 13, 2020.

He was born in Scotch Plains, N.J., grew up in Clemmons, N.C., and lived the past 48 years in Oak Ridge, N.C. before moving to Friends Home. He long felt that the key to solving environmental crises lies not so much in developing more clever technologies but in choosing to live in ways that emphasize doing less and being still. He often remarked that “doing nothing is eco-friendly.”

Bill was a graduate of Wake Forest University, Yale Divinity School and Drew University, where he earned a Ph.D. He served as minister of Christian education then as pastor of First Friends Meeting in Greensboro for 23 years, until 1993. For the next nine years, he hosted retreats at Glenagape, fulfilling a long-time dream he had shared with his first wife, Margaret Dutton Stevens, who died in 1979. They bought their 40-acre homestead in Oak Ridge the year after graduating from Wake Forest in 1960 with the idea of developing a retreat ministry there, building with their own hands a house that could accommodate up to 24 overnight guests. Bill often said he felt blessed by the many people from around the world who came down his driveway to walk in the woods or sit on his decks.

Bill believed that the woods at Glenagape belong as much to the trees and ferns, birds and frogs who live there as to its human residents. In recent years, Bill placed the forest under a conservation easement with Piedmont Land Conservancy to protect it from future development.

In keeping with his intentions, the Greensboro Montessori School began a land program there several years ago that continues to bring students to this earth sanctuary several times a year to camp and learn what nature has to teach.

After being widowed for 25 years, Bill married Holly Allen Stevens in 2004, who died in 2011. He counted his care of her through nine years of paraplegia resulting from advanced breast cancer as his life’s greatest accomplishment. In addition to Margaret and Holly, Bill is predeceased by his parents William P. H. Stevens Sr. and Grace Tomlinson Stevens. He is survived by a daughter, Kristina Stevens of Oak Ridge; a son, Will Stevens and his wife Christina Stevens; granddaughters, Phoebe & Chloe Stevens of Greensboro

and two stepsons, Noah & Sam Jennings.

There will be a live Zoom Service on September 16, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. hosted by First Friends and New Garden Friends. For more information, email the office at office@firstfriendsmeeting.org.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggest donations to the Greensboro Montessori School's Margaret Dutton Stevens Environmental Education Endowment, 2856 Horse Pen Creek Road, Greensboro, NC 27410.

Comments



“ I began writing to Bill, after he moved in at Friends Home. He sent a letter back, including a copy of a Letter to the Editor he had sent to Time Magazine, in reference to a Detroit Project. The letter is dated December 1, 2009.

Though I never got to meet Bill, I treasured him. Reading the thoughtful obituary, I cherish him all the more.

Jo Ann Dalgard

Tecumseh, MI

Jo Dalgard - September 15 at 01:38 PM