



Wilbur C. Woodhams

APR 27, 2006



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Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Tribute Wall	Page 6



Wilbur C. Woodhams

APR 27, 2006

The Rev. Wilbur Charles Woodhams, former rector of Christ Church in Tacoma and of St. Paul's Within-the-Walls in Rome, Italy, died April 27 in Gig Harbor. He would have been 89 on May 2. Rev. Woodhams, who was called Bill, was known for his wide ranging interests and keen intellect, a worldly charm which drew many friends into his circle, a buoyant step and lively sense of humor, a thatch of white hair, and Hollywood good looks. He was also an avid sailor, a builder, a schemer, a skier, a lover of poetry and music, a painter, a horn player, a family man, a Harvard-trained lawyer, a Jungian analyst, something of a tennis player, something better of a cook, and a digger of clams. While rector of Christ Church from 1950-1961, Bill was also chaplain at Annie Wright School, and involved in the restoration of St. Peter's in Old Town, the establishment of St. Matthew on Brown's Point, and the founding of Charles Wright School. It was during this time that he met his mentor, the late Stephen F. Bayne, the Bishop of Olympia and later Bishop of the European Convocation, who recommended Bill for the post at St. Paul's in Rome. Rev. Woodhams was rector at St. Paul's from 1961-1982, a period that encompassed ecumenical, cultural and political upheaval. He was particularly interested in the rapprochements between the Catholic and Anglican churches prompted by the ecumenical councils of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI in the 1960s. He commissioned the noted sculptor Dmitri Hadzi to design and construct two huge door panels on the front of St. Paul's to commemorate the first meeting of the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury in Rome. When these were completed, and the doors swung open, it was an historic first in the 100-year history of this great church - by edict, Protestant churches had not been allowed to open their doors directly to a Roman street. Bill's time in Rome was fruitful and intellectually challenging. He established the Joel Nafuma Refugee Center, which remains active to this day ministering to refugees from oppression, and he was a founding trustee of



St. Stephen's School, one of Europe's premier high schools. In 1971 he took a sabbatical from St. Paul's and studied at the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich. Born May 2, 1917, in Palo Alto, CA, Bill grew up largely in Redwood City, CA. His father, Clifton H. Woodhams Sr, was also a California native and the Woodhams family were early settlers in the Bay Area. His mother, Caroline Doxsee Woodhams, was of Iowa stock, and many of Bill's pioneer ancestors were early settlers of the upper Midwest. Rev. Woodhams was graduated from Stanford University in 1938 and Harvard Law School in 1941, upon which he joined the California Bar and was a proud member all his life. He married Margaret Coleman (known as Margo) of San Francisco in 1939. When World War II broke out, Bill joined the Navy and was a supply officer on Liberty ships in the North Pacific from 1943-45. During this time, Bill and Margo lived on Hood Canal and developed a love for the Puget Sound that they would never lose. After the war, Bill attended the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Cambridge, MA, and he then served as an associate rector at St. Luke's in San Francisco before being called to Christ Church in 1950. Upon retiring from St. Paul's in 1982, Bill and Margo, who passed away in 1996, moved to Gig Harbor but spent much time at the family beach house at Rocky Bay on Key Peninsula. Bill built the cabin in 1951 and it has remained a treasured family spot ever since. Bill was widely noted for entertaining at Rocky Bay, and he spent many worthwhile hours maintaining the place in his later years. He loved nothing more than keeping Rocky Bay simple and rustic, digging clams on the beach (and turning them into a pasta sauce), having a sail, and playing his trombone on the deck. In retirement, Rev. Woodhams also traveled widely, maintaining friendships and business relationships in Europe. He fixed up an old goat-herder's cabin in Questa, NM. He edited an anthology of sermons and prayers by Bishop Bayne, and it was published as "Now is the Accepted Time." Bill married Lynn Martin, a poet and English teacher, in 1999. They lived joyfully between her house in Purdy, known as Appleshade, and the Rocky Bay beach cabin 10 miles away. In addition to Ms. Martin, Rev. Woodhams is survived by his 6 children: Margaret Fuchs of Dogern, Germany, Caroline of Tacoma, Charles of East Montpelier, Vt., Mark of Tucson, AZ, Stephen of Santa Cruz, CA, and Sarah Perret of Geneva, Switzerland; by 16 grandchildren and 2 great



Obituary

Wilbur C. Woodhams

grandchildren; and by his sister Carol Woodhams of Arcata, CA. Visitation will be held from 1-9 PM on Friday, May 5, 2006 at Mountain View Funeral Home. The service will be held 10:30 AM on Saturday, May 6, 2006 at Christ Church, Tacoma, with burial at the Vaughn Cemetery. Donations may be made to Nativity House, 2304 S. Jefferson Ave., Tacoma, WA 98402.



Tribute Wall

Wilbur C. Woodhams



Anonymous posted:

We didn't know Bill well, partly because we keep a low profile and partly because Bill was also quiet, unassuming, and (according to the Whittleseys) a hell of a fine person. Our deepest sympathies. Leonard & Jeannine Lukin##imported-begin##Leonard & Jeannie Lukin##imported-end##

May 8 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Dearest Lynn, I'm so sorry for your loss. It means so much to me that you shared the obit notes and other information. I never knew him, but almost feel as if I did. My heart will ache with all of the other hearts who knew and loved him and my heart aches for your grief. Hold on to the joy of the time you walked together. Love, Kathy home email is imaginevineyard@msn.com##imported-begin##Kathy Moser##imported-end##

May 8 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

In all ways, for, and from, the blue bowl.##imported-begin##Jim & Karen Bodeen##imported-end##

May 7 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Bill watched over our family from the early 70s to date and was a friend and mentor the likes of whom we are unlikely to cross again. He was instrumental in so many areas of our lives, health, work, education, sport, philosophy, art, music, language. Today I wonder what my life would have been without Bill Woodhams. He will be deeply missed.##imported-begin##gregory lee##imported-end##

May 7 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Dear Lynn, My Mother sent word of your loss. Please accept my deepest sympathy. What an incredible soul Bill has! I'm sorry I never had the opportunity to know him. Best wishes and love to you. Respectfully, David Pavolka (Peninsula High School)##imported-begin##David Pavolka##imported-end##

May 6 at 6:00 PM



Tribute Wall

Wilbur C. Woodhams



Anonymous posted:

Fr Woodhams was always special to me and my sister. He was our priest at Annie Wright and he drove us over the mountains to Yakima after we learned of our father's death. A very caring person, he will be deeply missed.##imported-begin##Kathy Parks George##imported-end##

May 6 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

The end of an era##imported-begin##Jane Selby berni##imported-end##

May 5 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

I was confirmed by Father Woodhams with Bishop Bayne attending on June 7th, 1958. They both signed my prayer/hymnal book. My family would drive from Milton to Christ Church every Sunday plus our choir practices. My life has been guided by the lessons taught by Father Woodhams every Sunday. He taught about love and forgiveness. He taught about God's love for us all. I remember the blackboard he would bring out to explain his beliefs. This man shaped our lives and I will be forever grateful for having spent my childhood listening and learning from him. To his children, I know your pain after having lost my parents many years ago. To his wife, you have lost greatly. What a wonderful life you must have had. I love and remember the old church with the beautiful light coming through the windows. But most of all I remember Father Woodhams teaching love and for that I will always be grateful. I try to intill that same love in my children and grandchildren remembering what I was taught. Thank you and God Bless you all.##imported-begin##Jan Holmes Cook##imported-end##

May 3 at 6:00 PM



Tribute Wall

Wilbur C. Woodhams



Anonymous posted:

I have the fondest and most vivid images and memories of Bill at Rocky Bay, even though I have just been there a few times with him and Lynn. Bill's wit and intelligence and sensitivity and awareness remain with me very keenly. I can still see him bending over the hearth to grill perfect steak florentine and gathering clams. The way he would arch his brow. And how when he felt some suffering in me his keen intelligence became all care and humility. I heard a therapist on the radio say the other day, "All unsolicited advice is disrespectful." I thought: Bill understood that humility instinctively, despite his own experience and wisdom. I felt like he really understood me even though our friendship was through Lynn. I am really grateful for him. And I will remember in my own prayer this loss for Lynn and the children and grandchildren and other family members and friends. It's the anniversary of my own mother's death today, and what a teaching a life and death can be. What a "cloud of witnesses." Chris Lorenc##imported-begin##Chris Lorenc##imported-end##

May 2 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Bill was very kind to me before I had the honor to succeed him as Rector of St. Paul's, during my tenure there, and afterwards when I was in NY. We will remember him in prayer here at the Church of the Incarnation, Madison Ave.##imported-begin##Douglas Ousley##imported-end##

May 2 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

The Schmitt family sends our condolences and remembers when the Reverend Mister Woodhams, whom we called "Mister Woodhams", came to Christ Church. We remember Sunday services where some of us served as acolytes. We remember the packed holiday services at Christmas and Easter but we also remember Amahl and the Night Visitors where he played Job and our dad, Lionel, played one of The Wise men and Pete played The Page. Although our Mother had become a Sunday School teacher, it was Mr. Woodhams who encouraged our Dad to become active in church activities and he became a Lay Reader and member of the vestry. We remember serving at weddings and baptisms where Mr. Woodhams created an atmosphere of dignity and elegance that enhanced each celebration. We also remember YPF and field trips to St. Marks. We remember attending Mr. Woodhams as an acolyte at the Greek Orthodox Easter services. And we remember Sunday afternoons at Rocky Bay, although we, as kids, didn't appreciate the experience as much as we should have. But most of all, we remember Mister Woodhams. Rest in peace, The Schmitt Family Pete Susie Mike Ron Judy##imported-begin##Pete Schmitt##imported-end##

May 2 at 6:00 PM



Tribute Wall

Wilbur C. Woodhams



Anonymous posted:

It was our privilege to meet and know Bill after he married our good friend, Lynn Martin. He will be remembered as a brilliant, witty, suave, and gracious gentleman. What a wonderful life he led! Our sincerest condolences and good thoughts go to his family. We send you lots of love,
Lynn.##imported-begin##Bob and Marilyn Henley##imported-end##

May 1 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

To the Children,We Joined Christ Church in 1952, my mother, sister & I. We had no other relatives. We walked or took the bus because we had no car for the first several years.I remember you siting in the front and beng so interested in you. You were a family. I am sure you shared your Father more than you wished at times. Please know that for this person he was a father figure during that informative time and later a brother in Christ.So a thank you to you all for the sharing of your Father with so many and in particular with me during the years he served.Together by His plan and in His Victory -
Sue##imported-begin##Sue Clark##imported-end##

May 1 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Lynn & family, especially Margaret,Please accept my condolences and sympathy.The Matson family came to Christ Church in 1950, when I was 8 years old. "Mr. Woodhams" had profound influence on my life. I enjoyed his sermons and was confirmed when I was 9. He was there at my brother Tom's baptism. Tom was the first baby baptized at the Brown's Point Misson Church, sponsored by Christ Church. Recently I was able to talk with Bill at my father's 80th birthday and then again two years ago at my father's memorial service. They were both born the same year and I let him know that because of his charisma and unfailling faith in God, I let his messages reach my heart, even as a child. "Mr. Woodhams" seemed surprised that he had that much influence.Now I am working with guidance from the Light, as well. I am a Jungian psychotherapist, practicing as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and a registered yoga teacher, with certification to work with children who have special needs.I can relate to your losses and offer you my deep empathy. I understand that your life was challenging growing up with a minister as a father/ husband. I've learned that God is the source of our direction and the path sometimes is challenging to follow the Light here on Earth. I believe that the world was enhanced because of the Lightworker, The Reverand Wilbur C. Woodhams, and hold him lightly in my heart.##imported-begin##Christine Matson Bandettini##imported-end##

May 1 at 6:00 PM



Tribute Wall

Wilbur C. Woodhams



Anonymous posted:

We have many fond memories of our years at Christ Church. And the times with my parents, Lionel and Gerry Schmitt at Rocky Bay were fun. Our thoughts and prayers our with his family. Susie & Ray Renz##imported-begin##Ray and Suzanne[Schmitt] Renz##imported-end##

May 1 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Father Woodhams has entered the Kingdom after a long and rich life in which he accomplished many splendid works. We send our sincere sympathy to his family in their great loss. Joy and Duv Wiseman##imported-begin##Joy and Duv Wiseman##imported-end##

May 1 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

NULL##imported-begin##Elizabeth Hecht##imported-end##

May 1 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

NULL##imported-begin##Rev. Angela V. Askew##imported-end##

May 1 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

To all the family, Rev Woodhams was a delightful man. I remember his wonderful singing voice every morning at Chapel. As Pastor and father of a classmate he knew us all and always had a kind greeting. He was a talented, remarkable man. My thoughts and prayers are with you all.##imported-begin##Viki Woolf Kocho##imported-end##

April 30 at 6:00 PM



Tribute Wall

Wilbur C. Woodhams



Anonymous posted:

Dear Lynn,I am so sorry to hear of your beloved Bill's passing. My heart and mind are with you right now. Years ago, at Rocky Bay, both you and Bill comforted me with words, prayer, and incredible cooking. I am forever grateful.##imported-begin##Courtney Caughran Winkfield##imported-end##

April 30 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Dear Lynn and family, Bill was the epitome of living life to the fullest. What a man in full! We will remember him with great affection and savor many happy memories of being in his company. Our condolences to you and our thoughts are with you. Dee Dee Allen and Ernest Jacobi##imported-begin##Dee Dee Allen##imported-end##

April 30 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

My dear Lynn,I am saddened to learn of Bill's death, and know that when you are eating lunch on the porch at Appleshade, it won't be the same. But the memories will soon bring comfort.I am grateful that I had met Bill, drank some good Italian wine with both of you, and have many of his paintings on my notecards.I pray for God's strength and love to sustain you.We'll talk soon. God bless you.Love, Sheryl##imported-begin##Sheryl Fulton##imported-end##

April 30 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Lynn, Please accept our sincere sympathy on the passing of your soulmate. Love to you, Carol and Ed##imported-begin##Carol and Ed Goss##imported-end##

April 30 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

When asked how he should be addressed, the new rector of Christ Episcopal Church replied that he was the Reverend Mister Woodhams. Not Father Woodhams " although he could accept that title from visitors eager to please " but Mister Woodhams. Perhaps to a few he was Bill Woodhams, certainly a less formidable form of address than the full Wilbur Charles Woodhams. Nevertheless, regardless of how he was named, there was within him the iron core of discipline derived as much from his heritage as his training in the law. He was formidable, a quality much needed in anyone who presumed to be the chief priest at a church which was the home of a number of communicants who knew of their own importance and condescended to recognize few equals. Mr. Woodhams was an inspiration to a great many of us who were once young and members of the congregation of Christ Episcopal Church. He was a brilliant preacher but more than that he was a man whose urbanity and humanity gave us hope that, despite our imperfections and our provincial ways, we, too, might know and serve Christ. His intelligence was amazing; his capacity to see the individual in the context of his self-evaluation as a member of society comforting; and his honesty regarding himself and others was disarming, sometime almost frightening, often unnerving. He cut through pretense, posturing and presumption with a quick wit which bore no malice but that brought many of us up short to reconsider what we had just said we thought. As one of his acolytes I remember with what fervor and humility we acolytes recited with him the priest's confession in the sacristy of old Christ Church before communion. It was a moment of penitence offset by a sense of timelessness and forgiveness and the presence of the Holy Spirit. He was, in every sense, the spiritual leader of a community of the faith. I do not know how many young persons for whom his example may have been an influence that directed them into the field of law, but of the children at Christ Church at least a scant dozen followed him into the ministry. Of those of us in the latter category, none, I think, were oblivious of his personal trials or imperfections as a human being. Some how, these simply renewed our faith in the goodness of God and His capacity to utilize even us, frail and feckless creatures that we were, just as God used our priest, friend and mentor, Wilbur Charles Woodhams, for the sublime purpose of building the Kingdom of God. There were the several moments of grace at Christ Church over which he presided. I would suggest remembrance of the Christmas production of Amahl and The Night Visitors and the reading version of the verse play J.B. by Alister MacLeish, in which he played the part of Job. In these and other ways he reached out to bring people into a relationship with God. Not the least of which were the mid-week Lenten Services, often featuring Bishop Stephen Fielding Bayne, all of which created an accepting, inclusive, believing community. His translation to Rome marked a high point in the life of the Episcopal Church in the United States and the larger Anglican Church Communion. Bishop Bayne had become the first Executive Officer of the Anglican Communion and in addition to beginning the process of converting the colonial Church of England in Africa to an organic Anglican Church in Africa with the Book of Common Prayer in the several native tongues of the emerging states; the appointment of Mr. Woodhams to the Anglican Church in Vatican City led to an important advancement of Anglican-Catholic relations. It is difficult to assess which of these was the more important of Bishop Bayne's decisions. But it is clear that in the reign of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI, Mister Woodhams played a very quiet, adroit, and important role in ecumenical affairs. He was, however, the quintessential parish priest, a role he never relinquished. And he will remain an icon of the faith to those of us privileged to have been his acolytes, blessed to have had him as a ment



Tribute Wall

Wilbur C. Woodhams



April 29 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Bill showed me the way to Christ's grace and forgiveness. For this and his patient counsel I am forever grateful. It was a privilege to have known him, an extraordinarily gifted servant of God.--
Melissa Weinman Jagosh##imported-begin##Melissa Weinman Jagosh##imported-end##

April 30 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

NULL##imported-begin##Margaret and Brown Morton##imported-end##

April 29 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Margaret, I went to Annie Wright Seminary with you and we were good friends. I was Kathy Thomas and I remember both your parents and your lovely home in the North End. My dad was Charles and my mom Phyllis. Sorry about your Dad's death. My Dad died at the age of 90 a couple years ago. I read in the obituary that you live in Germany. My husband and I live in Seattle and Palm Desert, Ca. both.##imported-begin##Kathy Thomas Luderman##imported-end##

April 29 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

My thoughts and prayers are with you as you say goodbye to a most remarkable man, your father##imported-begin##Maxine Daly##imported-end##

April 29 at 6:00 PM



Anonymous posted:

Lynn and family, Bill was a very special man, and we were honored and privileged to have known him. The memories of all he touched will keep his spirit alive for many years to come. May the special memories of joyful times together see you all through the sad times again as you share your loss with one another. He is already much missed.##imported-begin##Colleen Slater##imported-end##

April 29 at 6:00 PM



Tribute Wall

Wilbur C. Woodhams



Anonymous posted:

Dear Lynn, We are saddened to learn of Bill's passing. Your soulmate, confidant, and best friend will be missed. May you find peace and joy in the memories of your life together. with much love, P.S. I'm sure there is great pizza in Heaven.##imported-begin##Teres and Danny Millar##imported-end##

April 29 at 6:00 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Wilbur by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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