



William Chowning Dennis

November 4, 1943 - July 28, 2018

William C Dennis Jr., Business Executive and Entrepreneur, Dies at 74

Bill Dennis was born in Miami Beach, Florida, on November 4th 1943. His parents were raised in the Texas panhandle and he spent most of his childhood in Lubbock, Texas, home to one of his favorite musicians, Buddy Holly. Bill received his undergraduate degree from Texas Tech University. He married Katharine Finley on May 28, 1966, and soon after they headed to Thunderbird School of Global Management in Phoenix, AZ, where he completed a graduate degree in business. Despite having grown up in a small town, his curiosity and adventurous nature led him to travel and explore many other countries and cultures. His passion to explore the world led him to travel the globe and live in El Salvador, Brazil, and Argentina to name just a few. Bill could tell a joke in Spanish or Portuguese as easily as he could in his native Texas drawl. Some of his proudest achievements came later in his career. From 2001 through 2015, Bill was the CEO of Latin American Operations for Laureate Education. During his tenure at Laureate, he and his colleagues acquired Universities and built higher learning centers to benefit communities throughout the Americas. When he retired, Laureate was the largest for-profit Education company in the world, due largely to their success in Latin America. In order to acknowledge Bills impact on global education, Laureate established The William C. Dennis Jr. Scholarship for International Studies in his honor. Bills passion and energy was undeniable, and retirement was never

an option. After Laureate, Bill decided to return to his family heritage in cattle farming. He began raising Wagyu cattle in 2013 and expanded into olives and olive oil in 2015. He was passionate about music and art and was involved in establishing the Reilly Arts Center, a new flagship for arts and culture, in downtown Ocala. Whether it was his businesses, his travel, his love of the arts or his family, Bill did everything with passion and with a plan to always make things better. He left an indelible impression on all who knew him and his accomplishments and generosity will never be forgotten.

Bill passed away on the morning of July 28, 2018 surrounded by his loved ones. He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Katharine Finley Dennis, his daughter, Jessica Hope Dennis-Capiraso, his son William Chowning Dennis, III, his son-in-law Michael Capiraso, daughter-in-law Megan Dennis, his three granddaughters, Gwynne Grace Capiraso and Piper Dennis, and his sister, Susan Dennis Skipper.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, August 4, 2018 at 2:00pm in the Reilly Arts Center with interment to follow in Highlands Memorial Park Cemetery. Following the interment the family would like everyone to join them for a reception at Clear Creek Farm, 9501 West Highway 326, Ocala, FL 34482

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting any donations be made to the Reilly Arts Center at www.reillyartscenter.com.

Tribute Wall

AM

“ KayAmy and I share your grief at the passing of our dear friend Bill. We will miss his smile, humor and intellect. His zest for life was infectious. We are in Charleston for our grandson's 4th birthday but our hearts will be with you today sharing the celebration of a special friend.Allen and Amy Musikantow

Allen Musikantow - August 04, 2018 at 12:00 AM

GR

“ Dear Dennis family,We will miss Bill. He will always be remembered with admiration and gratitude for being such a smart and generous colleague, friend and mentor. Having touched so many lives in so many positive ways, his legacy will be lasting.Sincere condolences,Germn , Mnica, Camila

Germn Ramrez - August 03, 2018 at 12:00 AM

ES

“ A GRANDMA'S GARDEN TABLE BASKET was ordered on August 3, 2018

Expression of Sympathy - August 03, 2018 at 12:00 AM

ES

“ A Grandmother's Garden Remembered Wreath was ordered on August 3, 2018

Expression of Sympathy - August 03, 2018 at 12:00 AM

AU

“ I learned today of Bills passing. I worked with him for 5 great years. Learned a lot from him , he left a great legacy in Latin America. He will be remebered as he touched and helped a lot of people. My deepest condolences.

Alberto Ulloa - August 03, 2018 at 12:00 AM

AP

“ We lost a man who was kind to children and generous . My daughter Mia still remembers a day of riding a horse atvBill and Kates with 7 other kids. Mia was 9 at the time and now 26. Bill was smart and had the heart of a lion in business. So sorry for your loss Kate. With Prayers, Alan Peck

Alan Peck - August 02, 2018 at 12:00 AM

ES

“ A Designer's Choice 4 was sent by The Miller / LaRosa Crew on August 2, 2018

Expression of Sympathy - August 02, 2018 at 12:00 AM

PS

“ My deepest condolences to Bill's family. I met Mr. Bill Dennis when I joined Laureate in 2008. He was a beautiful human being but very dedicated to his work and zero tolerance for mistakes. Everything needed to be perfect and never try to play him trying to hide numbers that did not match for his presentation. I always said that he was a Blessed man not for what he had on the material side but the love and caring that he gave to his mother made him a Blessed Man. I know for sure that today he is in a better place where there is not sickness and everything is perfect in the Presence of God in Heaven. Love you Billy. I can continue writing about so many episodes that we lived in the Miami office, but not enough space.

Patricia Selles - August 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

ED

“ Remembering a younger Billy and happy times singing along and him playing the piano. I treasure the recent time spent visiting over the phone and sharing his music. He was such a talented and truly lovely man. Love you always cousin Billy, God blessed you. Bo

Elizabeth 'bo' Drury - August 01, 2018 at 12:00 AM

ES

“ A RAY OF SUNSHINE was sent on July 31, 2018 Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Family of Robert and Barbara Dennis

Expression of Sympathy - July 31, 2018 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ Dear Kate, We are so sad, we did not know he was sick. We will miss him; his energy, his passion, his enthusiasm, his friendship. A great man and friend. He will live in our memory and our heart for ever. Please receive all our friendship, support and condolence at this sad moment. Marta and Jorge Selume

Jorge Selume - July 31, 2018 at 12:00 AM