



William Temple "Bill" Morse

October 19, 1939 - February 20, 2025

William Temple (Bill) Morse, 85 of Ocala, FL (formerly of NYC) passed away peacefully on Thursday February 20, 2025 after living with progressive supranuclear palsy for approximately five years.

Bill was born in Chicago, IL, to William Lowery and Florence Elizabeth (Temple) Morse on October 19, 1939. He grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and the US Army 82nd Airborne Division. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and later attended Seton Hall Law School in Newark, New Jersey, where he graduated at the top of his class and was known casually as "five years or a bullet, Bill" because of his pessimistic view on long term incarceration as a means of rehabilitation. With a flat, midwestern accent and a voice reminiscent of a radio announcer, he was a natural salesman and a serial entrepreneur. He had many businesses over the course of his life, but may be most remembered for his lifelong passion for comic books. It has been said he opened the first ever comic book shop in NYC – quite possibly the very first comic book shop in all of North America! Bill was a diehard fan of Edgar Rice Burroughs books, films, and media - the most famous character being Tarzan - and was well known to the legions of ERB fans across the world for his expansive knowledge of the genre and his warm and charming demeanor. Bill had a special gift of the gab and could talk to almost anyone about almost anything. He was an amazing speaker, story teller, raconteur, and bon vivant. He was a regular at the 11th Street Bar, and at Mona's Bar in the East Village, usually enjoying a scotch whiskey and

listening to live jazz, celtic, or folk music while happily passing the tip jar around for the musicians. After spending most of his adult life working in the city, he could be often found visiting the Strand bookstore on Broadway (or any of the used bookstores across town), dining at the now closed Odessa's on the lower east side (or any number of tasty hole-in-the-wall restaurants), and browsing through charity shops, swap meets and flea markets in search of treasures, oddities, and collectibles. When he moved to Florida, Bill found a comic book shop to order his comics and keep collecting, a swap meet to hunt for treasures, and a restaurant and bar with live music to frequent with his local friends and family.

Bill is survived by many family members: his son William Nathan Morse, Venice, FL; daughter Catherine Elizabeth McClure Holland (Claus Jurgen McClure Holland) of Ocala, FL; son James Albert Francisco Morse (Brandon Doss) of Los Angeles, CA.; his sisters, Georgia Morris of Jacksonville, FL and Martha White of Ocala, FL. Six grandsons - Michael J. Schenck (Haleigh Pospiech) of Land O' Lakes, FL; Jacob R. Schenck (Kayla Schenck) of Lititz, PA; Samuel M. Guskind (Shalei Taylor-Guskind) of Groton, CT; William C. Morse of Leicester, England; Robert J. Morse (Gretchen Grimes) of Ellicott City, MD; and Austin C. Morse of Ellicott City, MD. One granddaughter, Angelina F. McClure Holland (Patrick Fraser) of Ocala, FL. And five great-grandchildren, Ryland, Micah, Amari, Fraya and Piper. And many, many loved friends and family across the globe.

He is preceded in death by a son, John Michael Morse, a daughter, Deborah Jean Morse, and a brother John G. Morse.

A Celebration of Life will be held at his daughter Catherine's home in Ocala, where he resided, on March 8th, 2025 at 2pm. On Monday, June 9th of this year, there will be a "Night of Bill" hosted at his favorite spot Mona's Bar in NYC, where his many, many friends can come to celebrate him and share their stories (date to be determined) followed by a burial at the family plot in Grandville, NY.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Gathering

MAR 8. 2:00 PM (ET)

Residence
2626 NE 37th Place Road
Ocala, FL

Celebration of Life

JUN 9 (ET)

Mona's Bar
224 Avenue B Unit 14
New York , NY 10009

"Night of Bill"