

Memorial Minute for William Tazwell Sledd III

August 25, 1935 – July 6, 2017

William Tazwell Sledd III, on July 6, 2017, in East Lansing, Michigan. Bill was born on August 25, 1935, in Murray, Kentucky. He earned a doctorate in mathematics from the University of Kentucky in 1961 and taught mathematics to appreciative students at Michigan State University until retirement.

He enjoyed fishing, camping, canoeing, bird watching, baseball, and time with friends and family. Bill read widely and enjoyed Mark Twain, Jim Harrison, Eudora Welty, and other southern writers. Fun loving and soft spoken, a sparkle in his eyes often foreshadowed a dry southern wit.

Bill loved to travel and lived abroad in London and Paris for his sabbatical years. He returned to Paris several times and spoke French. One of his favorite adventures was rafting down the Grand Canyon with the Sierra Club folks. He also visited Alaska many times, hiking and fishing. He was committed to an active involvement in keeping our environment clean. He liked to participate in the annual Red Cedar River clean-up and when he lived in the country would regularly pick up trash along his road.

In retirement he returned to playing chess at the local community center and with friends young and old. He also loved playing the harmonica, especially when he could join friends at his annual Kentucky Derby Party to sing "My Old Kentucky Home."

Bill sought the divine in the silent worship among Red Cedar Friends, in the smiles of children, in the purr of adored cats, in a circle of friends and family, in the masterful unfolding of a mathematical theorem, and in the dynamic curvature of a fly-fishing line skillfully released into the morning mist.

He approached the end of his life with patience, courage, and a sense of humor as he faced Parkinson's Disease. Bill is survived by his daughters Luanne (David) Price and Jane Sledd; grandchildren Laura (Andrew) Hartnett, Courtney (Tim Bell) Leavitt, and Justin and Kyle Watkins; and great-grand daughter Colette Hartnett. Also surviving are companion Judith Morrigan and former wife Margery Clark-Lewis.