



William David Rezak

August 30, 1940 - January 14, 2017

William D. Rezak, Ph.D.

Bill Rezak, educator, author, Harley rider, and father, died from cancer on January 14, 2017 in Tavares, Florida. He remained active and upbeat while sick, a fact that will not surprise anyone who knew him.

Bill was born on August 30, 1940 in Rochester, New York to Polly and Nick Rezak. His early childhood was spent in Rochester and Rome, New York and in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, where his father was stationed with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

The family moved to Syracuse in 1947. Bill graduated from Nottingham High School in 1957, where he started for four years with the '57 city champion Bulldogs. Bill played college junior-varsity football in a post-graduate year for the Manlius School's Scarlet Knights. He graduated from Lehigh University in 1962. His four-year varsity career with the Lehigh Engineers was highlighted by their 1961 Lambert Trophy Championship. He was a member of Beta Theta Pi fraternity and remained an active Lehigh alumnus and supporter throughout his life.

Upon graduation, Bill returned to Syracuse to work for Solvay Process as an engineer. He was a professional engineer, licensed in several states.

In 1964 he went to work for EBASCO Industries in NYC. Rezak became a project manager on major power plant construction projects, including a serendipitous assignment in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. There he met and married the love of his life, Paula Burroughs.

Bill and Paula started their family in Chatham, New Jersey where he earned a Masters in Mechanical Engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology. They moved to Stuart, Florida, and ultimately settled in Roswell, Georgia. In Roswell, Paula founded a successful consulting company, while Bill left industry and consulting to teach engineering at the baccalaureate level.

A few years later Bill became Dean of the School of Technology at Southern Polytechnic State University in Marietta, Georgia. During this time, Rezak earned his Ph.D. in Human Resource Development from Georgia State University.

Bill became President of SUNY Alfred State College in 1993. Bill relished the challenges of this leadership role. His vision drove the establishment of multiple new four-year curricula and campus initiatives. Bill and Paula also founded ground-breaking, inclusive non-academic programs and lead off-campus community programs.

Bill's father, Nick, retired as executive director of the United Way of Central New York. Bill continued this commitment to others by serving as both campaign chair and president of the Allegany County United Way Board of Directors for multiple years.

Bill found time to become an accomplished Harley rider and a journeyman mechanic during this chapter of his life. Upon Rezak's retirement in 2003, he and Paula built their retirement home in Gainesville, Georgia. They rode their

Harleys around the US and Bill began the first of his three books. He became an instrumental board member to several non-profit organizations in Gainesville – Good News Clinics, Lakeview Academy, and Challenged Child.

Between 2003 and 2017, Bill wrote: “The Arab and the Brit: The Last of the Welcome Immigrants,” which is his family's remarkable immigration story; “The Best Dang Job in the World: A Leadership Guide for College and University Administrators,” about leadership in higher education; and “God is Not a Real Estate Agent,” identifying a true path toward resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The latter he published last month with help from his daughter, Sarah.

Paula Burroughs Rezak died in 2006. Bill's children had settled in distant locations. He traveled, wrote and discovered new love with his partner of the last eight years, Diane Freeman. Bill and Diane enjoyed many adventures, ultimately settling in Chattanooga and Orlando to be near loved ones.

Bill Rezak was predeceased by his parents and his wife, Paula Burroughs Rezak. He is survived by his son David Todd (Tanya) Rezak of Orlando; daughter Sarah Rezak of Orlando and Singapore; granddaughter (and light of his life) Alba Rezak; partner Diane Freeman of Chattanooga, Tennessee; brother David Mark (Linda) Rezak of Syracuse, NY; and many beloved cousins and loved ones. Bill was a gregarious soul who genuinely loved others and was deeply loved in return.

Services honoring Bill will be held on Saturday, January 21st at 2pm at A Community Funeral Home & Sunset Cremations (910 W. Michigan St, Orlando, FL, 32805). This will be followed by a celebration of his life at La Fiesta Mexican Grill (3000 Curry Ford Dr, Orlando, FL, 32806).

In lieu of flowers, Bill's family requests that donations to be made to the Paula Rezak Support for a Caring Campus Endowed Fund or the Radia Khouri Rezak Family Endowed Scholarship at <http://alfredstate.edu/make-a-gift>

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

JAN 21. 2:00 PM (ET)

A Community Funeral Home & Sunset Cremations
910 W. Michigan Street
Orlando, FL 32805
(407) 841-4424
<https://www.acommunityfuneralhome.com/>