



William Austin Cowley

February 20, 1931 - April 12, 2023

Dr. William (Bill) Austin Cowley (92) entered this world on February 20, 1931 in Irvington, Kentucky and was peacefully reunited for eternity with his Heavenly father, loving wife, numerous family members and countless friends, on April 12, 2023. Bill was a faithful servant of God, and a committed husband, father and “Dadaddy”. He was preceded in death by his loving wife, Mrs. Audrey Evans Cowley, his parents, Mr. William Henry Cowley and Mrs. Elva Brown Cowley, and his sister, Mrs. Marianna Cowley Tate. Bill attended Georgetown College in Georgetown, KY, where he received his bachelor's degree in Speech in 1951. Subsequent to graduation, Bill worked for two years as Campus Minister and Alumni Director at his alma mater. He later received his Masters in Public Address from Florida State and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Education in 1972 from Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI. He was a proud member of Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi. In 1955, Bill and Audrey accepted an appointment by the Foreign Mission Board, later the International Mission Board (IMB), to serve as missionaries in Nigeria. For 23 years Bill served as an educational IMB missionary in Nigeria, West Africa alongside his loving Wife Audrey. Together, they built, taught, administrated in and nurtured the Baptist High School in Jos, Nigeria. Upon returning to the states, Bill accepted a position as a professor of speech and religion at Samford University in Birmingham, AL where he served from 1977 to 1993. He will be affectionately remembered as a “Uncle Bill” to scores of international missionary kids who came (without parents) to Alabama for

college during this time. Bill was a 46-year member of Shades Crest Baptist Church. Bill was father to Carol and Karen and “Dadaddy” to his grandchildren and great grandchildren and always gracious with a smile and a hug for any and all. The world is a worse place with him gone, but is a much better place because he was here. Bill is survived by his daughter Dr. Carol E. Cowley and daughter-in-law, Susan Walker of Bessemer, AL; his daughter Karen Bergquist and son-in-law John of Vestavia Hills, AL; his granddaughter, Brittany Mathis of Homewood, AL; his grandson, Eric Bergquist and wife, Megan of Vestavia Hills, AL, his granddaughter, Mira Walker of Ann Arbor, MI; his granddaughter, Laura Nell Walker of Birmingham, AL, his great grandson Grant Bergquist, his great granddaughter, Molly Bergquist, both of Vestavia Hills, AL, and his nephews, Bill Tate of Chattanooga, TN, Jeff Tate of Franklin, NC and David Tate of Cochranville, PA. The family would like to express their heartfelt and sincere thanks to Janet Njoroge, his caregiver, for her attentive and constant care and unconditional love for Bill, whom she called “dad”, over the past years. More to come on plans for a celebration of life for both Bill and Audrey (expected to take place later this Spring/Summer). In lieu of flowers or food, the family asks that you consider a contribution to the Samford University Legacy League Audrey and Bill Cowley MK Scholarship.

Tribute Wall

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“ My husband, James E. Hill, and myself were patients of Dr. Carol Cowley when she was at ACIPCO (American Cast Iron Pipe Company.) I'm just reading of Dr. Cowley's father's death and wanted to reach out to her. Because of her persistence, James was diagnosed promptly and referred to Dr Atkinson, oncologist, at Brookwood ...and prolong our time with him here on earth by seven years. I've tried to reach out to Dr. Cowley to thank her several times and have been unable to even find her name until now, when I just am finding her father's obituary. Dr. Carol Cowley, you were a blessing to me and my family ...I'm sorry to learn of the death of your father. I know he was extremely proud of you....

Shelley M. Hill - July 23, 2023 at 11:52 PM