



Bill Harper

September 28, 1925 - September 10, 2015

Oregon State lost a great Beaver Believer this week with the passing of Bill Harper. Bill passed away peacefully in the early morning hours on Thursday September 10, 2015. He was 89.

Bill was born to Wheeler Ross Harper and Bertha Belle West on September 28, 1925 in Garvin, Oklahoma. Bill was fortunate to have 7 brothers and 2 sisters growing up, and he always felt that was something special.

Bill graduated from Lincoln High School in Lincoln, Oklahoma. He enlisted in the Army, Special Service Program, serving mostly in the South Pacific area. Upon his discharge in January 1946, he entered Oregon State University where he played basketball and baseball for Slats Gill and Ralph Coleman. Bill was a member of Alpha Sigma Phi fraternity.

Bill met his future wife, Anne Hayworth, in a biology class where they needed to work with partners. Bill and Anne married on September 3, 1949 in Harrisburg, OR and celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary just before his passing.

Bill and Anne left Corvallis upon graduation from Oregon State in 1951 and headed to San Francisco where he played one year of basketball for Stewart Chevrolet in the National Industrial Basketball League. In December 1951, they welcomed their first daughter, Barbara, into the family.

In the summer of 1952, Bill, Anne and Barb moved to Roseburg, Oregon where Bill began his teaching and coaching career at Roseburg High School. Along with teaching and being the head basketball coach, Bill was asked to coach the Lockwood Motors American Legion baseball team. In his 10 years with the Legion club, Bill compiled a 417-78 overall record, making 2 World Series appearances and capturing 3 regional and 5 state titles. While living in Roseburg, Bill and Anne welcomed their second daughter, Kimberlee, to the family in February 1959.

In 1963, Bill and Anne and the girls headed back to Corvallis as Bill was offered a job at Oregon State University coaching basketball under Paul Valenti and baseball under Ralph Coleman. Besides his coaching responsibilities, Bill was an instructor in the Physical Education Department at Oregon State. It was also during his years at Oregon State, that he began doing some baseball scouting work for the Philadelphia Phillies on a part time basis.

In 1970, Bill was offered a full time position as the Northwest Area Scout for the Philadelphia Phillies, where he combed the Pacific Northwest to find the next major league prospect. Bill signed many, many players in his 40 plus years, including Larry Christianson, Ryne Sandburg, Kevin Stocker and Adam Eaton. His most memorable moments in his years with the Phillies were attending two World Series Championships (1980 & 2008) and two National League Championships (1983 & 1993).

On a rare day off from scouting, Bill could usually be found at the Corvallis Country Club playing a round of golf, either with Anne or with his "men's day group". One of Bill and Anne's favorite things was Sunday morning breakfast with their friends at the Country Club.

Bill is survived by his wife Anne, daughter Barb Locey and husband Steve,

daughter Kim Hoover and husband Jim, grandchildren Jenni Copeland (Josh), Brett Locey (Kelly), Kari Van Brunt (Roarke) and Kyle Hoover. Bill was also blessed with 5 great-grandchildren, Deagan, Brayden, Addison, Brady, and Avery. Bill's older brother Paul Harper (Patty) and many nieces and nephews also survive him. Bill is preceded in death by two sisters and six brothers. Bill always felt he was the luckiest guy around – he spent his entire life doing what he loved and he loved every minute of it. He will be greatly missed.

The family would like to thank the staffs of West Hills Assisted Living, Conifer House Memory Care and Benton County Hospice for all of their wonderful care and support.

Memorial contributions can be made to the Bill Harper Scholarship Fund, c/o OSU Baseball Dugout Club, 660 SW 26th Street, room 115, Gill Coliseum, Corvallis, OR 97331 or to Benton Hospice Service at 2350 NW Professional Dr. Corvallis, OR 97330.

A celebration of life is scheduled for Saturday September 26 at the Corvallis Country Club, 1850 SW Whiteside Drive, at 2:00.

Tribute Wall

WS

“ Great man, excellent coach, big influence on a lot of people's life, including mine. It was so great to walk into a ball park and see Bill scouting, always taking time to visit and ask how you were doing. He will be missed.

Wayne and Pam Swango

Wayne Swango - September 25, 2015 at 06:39 AM

HB

“ During the 1969-70 OSU Basketball season I was one of the student managers for the freshman basketball team that Bill coached. I learned a lot about mental toughness and concentration from Bill. Later I always enjoyed seeing Bill at the Country Club when visiting my in-laws in Corvallis.

We have lost a great Beaver and a fine man.

Sincerely

Harvey Berkey

Harvey Berkey - September 24, 2015 at 09:40 PM

MC

“ Great Man!! Great Loss!! It will not be the same at OSU Beaver games without Bill behind home plate. Thoughts and prayers to his family.

Mark Canham

Mark Canham - September 21, 2015 at 10:39 AM

JB

“ Anne and family,

I was seven years old in 1952. When your're seven your role model is your Dad. But I started Pee Wee baseball in 1952 and soon I had another role model/mentor, Coach Harper, although he never was able to teach me how to throw a curve ball. I played baseball for Coach Harper from 1952 thru 1964 and basketball in high school: tough and demanding, but always respectful of the individual player. Our mistakes and errors were treated as teaching moments.

The stats show his success, but the above intangibles show the man and those memories are his legacy for those of us who had the honor to play for him.

Jerry A. Boucock

Jerry A. Boucock - September 16, 2015 at 07:22 PM

KO

“ Prayers for the family.....Bill was a wonderful man and will be missed by so many. Sorry to hear this.....

Dick, Karen, Alex, Ashley and Emily Oldfield

karen j oldfield - September 16, 2015 at 02:34 PM

RC

“ Coach Harper and Mrs. Harper were so good to our brother Ran when he played ball for Bill and Lockwood Ford during the summer of 1963.

Rich Cool

Rich Cool - September 16, 2015 at 10:21 AM

LR

“ *Bill was definitely a mentor of mine at Roseburg High school as my basketball and baseball coach. He was a great person and positive influence in my life.* ”

Leroy Roberts - September 13, 2015 at 08:49 PM