



Willard Maurice Holsberry

October 16, 1935 - January 6, 2025

Willard "Will" Holsberry was born at the homestead farm on October 16, 1935, to Gilbert Maurice Holsberry and Evelyn Gertrude Nester Holsberry near Nestorville, West Virginia. They lived in West Virginia until Will was 11 years old.

In 1946, Will's family moved to Genoa, Colorado where they joined Will's mother's immediate family already residing in Colorado. Will's family was the last to move there. Will continued school in Genoa from 5th -12th grade, graduating high school in 1954. That summer after graduating, Will drove his Grandparents back to West Virginia to visit.

When they returned to Genoa, Violet Holsberry Hunter, Will's younger sister, introduced her friend Bobbie to Will. Vi and Bobbie were on the Cheer squad together. Will was Bobbie's date to homecoming the fall of 1954. They dated about 12 dates before they got engaged.

In January of 1955, Will joined the Air Force, 4 years active & 4 reserve. Bobbie graduated in 1955. She had earned a scholarship and went off to college. She attended North Colorado Teachers College. She and Will continued their relationship.

Will was stationed at Parks Air Force Base in California for 12 weeks of basic

training. Then onto Sheppard Air Force Base to school for financial training. When he finished, he was asked to instruct. He received an additional 7 weeks of training then began teaching Finance and Accounting classes. Will continued his education with Majors in both P.E. and Biology with a Minor in Math. He received his undergrad in 2 ½ years. By the end of year 3, Everything was completed on his Masters except the Thesis. (Side note) 2 professors who were huge mentors to Will, and they stayed in contact for years were Dewey Langston and Joe Dickson.

In 1958, Will moved from Sheppard Air Force Base to Lowry Air Force Base in Denver, Colorado where he spent his last 1 ½ military years there.

In 1956, Will and Bobbie were married, the summer after her freshman year of college. Briefly, In July of 1956, they moved to Wichita Falls, TX. In 1957, their 1st child was born, Ellen and in 1959, their 2nd daughter, Nancy. Both girls were born at Fitzsimmons Hospital in Aurora, Colorado, suburb of Denver.

Will finished the Military and moved his family to Portales, New Mexico. There his son Steve was born in 1960 and Susan in 1962. When Susan was about 5 months old, they moved to Aztec, New Mexico. Will began teaching Math for 1 year, in Aztec and coaching all sports.

In 1963 their family moved again to Lubbock, Texas where Will started what would begin his legacy of N.I.R.S.A, at Texas Tech. Will continued to teach at Texas Tech and was Assistant Director to Intramural Sports. Years later, National Intramural Association (NIA) changed the name to N.I.R.S.A (National Intramural Recreational Sports Association) It was a slow process, a bit controversial but it stuck! Will continued with Texas Tech for 12 years.

In 1973, Will was appointed as the Executive Secretary of NIRSA, taking over the NIRSA reigns from his boss at the time Edsel Buchanan, who was the

Director at Texas Tech.

In 1975, Will moved his family to Oregon where he took a position at Oregon State University and held dual roles as the Assistant Director of Physical Recreation and Assistant Professor in College Student Services Administration at Oregon State University. Oregon State agreed to allow Will to continue his work with NIRSA while working in his new position as Sports Director there.

In 1985, Will resigned as Executive Secretary of NIRSA. However, this did not end his work with NIRSA. Moving onto the next chapter and adventure of his NIRSA journey, was his appointment to full-time NIRSA Executive Director by the executive committee. Will was known for many great contributions to NIRSA's growth and development. One of which includes establishing the NIRSA National Office in 1986. Will continued to provide excellent leadership which helped NIRSA develop and grow into what it is today. NIRSA'S past President, Craig Stinson stated, "Wills love for our profession and for our membership is unrivaled. Without his leadership and vision, NIRSA would not be as successful as it is today". In 1997, after many successful years leading NIRSA, Will announced his retirement.

Will passed peacefully in the early morning of January 6, 2025. Will moved from Corvallis to Lake Oswego, to "Oswego Place Assisted Care" where he enjoyed his last few weeks being closer to his family.

Will was predeceased by his wife Bobbie Ruth Holsberry who passed 5-29-21.

Will is survived by his sister, Violet (Vi) Hunter of Alamosa, Colorado. His Daughter Ellen Holsberry and her son Justin. Will's Daughter Nancy Beall and her son Derrick and daughter Andrea. Will's son Steve and Janie Holsberry,

their son Christopher and daughter Vanessa. Will's daughter Susan and Mike Frank, their sons Brian, Jason and daughter Jennifer. Will and Bobbie have 8 Grandchildren and 15 Great Grandchildren.

Please share your thoughts and memories for the family at www.McHenryFuneralHome.com.

Tribute Wall

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“ *I'm saddened to hear of Will's passing. I'll miss our weekly phone chats.
May God bless you and comfort you through this time. Your in my prayers.
Lew Mengle*

Lew Mengle - January 11, 2025 at 01:52 PM