



Remembering our brothers who have passed from this life

PARKINS, EDWARD WILLIAM JR. '70 "BILL"

Bill Parkins of Bridgewater, also known as “Slip” by Valley sports fans, died 1 February 2012, one day before his 62nd birthday.

Bill Parkins used a lifetime of serious physical challenges, including two different cancers, to strengthen his faith in God and to encourage and inspire everyone within his reach. Both the powerful and the powerless knew his love and benefitted from his friendship. He was unique in a special way; anyone who met him seemed to sense it instantly.

Turner Ashby High School cited Parkins as being “one of the greatest fans of the past 50 years.” He was proud of his title as “honorary coach” of the TA football team and took his role seriously. He was also a staunch supporter of Lady Knights’ basketball and proudly wore his TA state championship ring.

Bill was familiar with and interested in the sports programs of other area high schools as well, and he knew coaches and players in many of them. Individuals in sports media who covered these events could also be counted among his friends.

College athletics was another area of interest. Bill could recite sports statistics and names of coaches and players from memory. He particularly followed Virginia Military Institute, the University of Virginia, and Duke, and he knew players and coaches from all three programs. A dream came true when he personally visited with Coach Mike Krzyzewski of Duke after years of emails between the two of them.

Parkins was an honorary brother rat and cadre of VMI's class of 1997. He proudly wore a VMI combat ring inscribed inside with the words, "A True Cadet", a cherished gift from VMI graduate Clifford Shifflett. Bill was publicly recognized as the Keydets' number one fan. In accepting the James Chadwick Kenna award for going the extra mile to help VMI's basketball program, Parkins responded, "To receive an award like this is really overwhelming. I give all the credit to the great head coach and athletic director, Jesus Christ."

As a cancer survivor, he valued visits and other communications with Zeta Tau Alpha Sorority and Alpha Phi Omega, a community service fraternity, both at James Madison University. Members of these organizations participated with him in Relay for Life. He enjoyed the camaraderie at Ruritan Club events and at Wingfield Ministries where he volunteered.

Bill Parkins graduated from Augusta Military Academy, Fort Defiance, in June 1970. In 2010 he was inducted into the AMA Sports Hall of Fame, more for his school spirit and limitless enthusiasm at athletic events than for his athletic prowess.

Bill earned a certificate from Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, Fishersville, in September 1972. He was employed at Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave, in the buildings and grounds department for 30 years. When he retired in 2001, he was given a large, framed citation, covered in the signatures of

administrators, faculty, and students, naming him “Ambassador Emeritus” of the College.

However, his most notable achievement was purely in being the kind of person that he was. He was a Godly man in how he treated others and how he lived his life. He taught by example. He inspired others to reach higher, to persevere, and to deepen their faith. In responding to a question about the meaning of “Honor Above Self” inscribed on his VMI ring, Mr. Parkins explained, “I interpret that to mean ‘Honor the Lord in everything. Don’t put yourself above your fellow man and He will exalt you in His own time.’” And that was the essence of his life.

Bill Parkins was a member of the Harrisonburg First Church of the Nazarene and considered the pastors and congregation a part of his extended family. Other extended family included the staff and residents of the Bridgewater Retirement Community, where he had resided since 1995, and the many doctors and nurses who cared for him in the local area and in Charlottesville. He prayed for these individuals regularly and cared for them deeply.

Born in Staunton on 2 February 1950, Bill was the son of Edward William and Anne Lou Dodd Parkins, who predeceased him. He is survived by first cousins, Sally F. Fulton of Weyers Cave; Polly B. Case of Massanutten; Anne C. Green and husband, Robert, of Springfield; and John S. Case and wife, Susan, of Richmond. He also leaves behind a special friend, Yvonne Chappell of Gainesville, GA, and second cousins who knew him as “Uncle Bill”.

At Augusta twelve years: Bill had his entire schooling at Augusta, where his father served as the principal administrator. Over the years, he played most sports.

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