William "Bill" Howard Beers

June 19, 1943 - June 1, 2024

William Howard Beers, affectionately known as Bill, passed away peacefully at home on June 1, 2024, at the age of 80. Bill was a loving father to Gregory (Parisa) and Katherine Beers. He was an affectionate grandfather to Zahra, Leila and Kimia and a devoted older brother to Andy. He is preceded in death by his mother Billie Baggs, his father, William Beers, his stepmother, Ruth Beers and his younger brother, Robert Beers.

Bill was born in 1943 in Panama while his father, a captain in the U.S. Army, was stationed in the Panama Canal Zone during World War Two. After the war the family moved to Elizabethton, Tennessee and later lived in Seattle, Washington, Danville, Virginia, and Elm Grove, Wisconsin where Bill graduated from high school in 1961.

Bill’s intelligence and continuous quest for knowledge led him to Harvard University where he pursued a degree in the sciences and graduated magna cum laude in 1965. After matriculating from Harvard, Bill pursued graduate studies at The Rockefeller University in Manhattan, earning a PhD in biochemistry.

While his academic knowledge was impressive, Bill was also a charismatic and extremely focused individual. These qualities allowed Bill to shine in a number of leadership positions in academia and at scientific research

organizations. He held a faculty position at The Rockefeller University in New York; was the Chairman of the Biology Department at New York University; was a Senior Vice President at The Scripps Research Institute in San Diego, California; and served as the first Chief Academic and Scientific Officer at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

One of Bill's proudest accomplishments from his scientific career was working with his students. He always kept his office hours flexible to fit their busy schedules. Decades later, he heard from one of these students who called to thank him for his mentorship upon which he built his scientific career. Bill's relationships with many of his students lasted throughout the years and they became lifelong friends.

While Bill enjoyed a long career of professional successes, he also had great pride in his family. Bill's love of his children was evident, and he lent support to them to develop their own individual interests and to reach their own professional and personal goals. He was also a proud and devoted grandfather who, at six foot four, was fondly known as "Grandpa Who Can Touch the Ceiling." He would often bring his young granddaughters' small toys, depicting local marine animals, on his visits with them so that he could share his knowledge and talk about their space in the environment. Additionally, a simple question, such as "why is the sky blue?" might yield a lengthy, but interesting and informative scientific explanation helping to foster an enthusiasm and awe about the world surrounding them. Bill was a lifelong learner and enjoyed sharing his intellectual curiosity with those around him.

Bill retired in 2008 and lived in Bellingham, Washington. Throughout his life, and especially in his retirement, Bill was an avid reader. His favorite place was simply in a chair, invested in a good book. He enjoyed several genres and both fiction and non-fiction. He simply loved to read and to learn as much as he could about the world around him. He enjoyed sharing and discussing

a good read with friends and loved ones. While in Bellingham, Bill also channeled his passion for the environment as a volunteer with Re Sources, a local environmental organization, and Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve where he served on the Citizen Stewardship Committee. His enthusiasm for preserving the environment was a lifelong and dedicated pursuit.

Friends remember him as a man of exceptional character. He possessed a sharp intellect, coupled with a dry wit that never failed to elicit laughter. Bill will be dearly missed by his friends and family and all who were lucky enough to know him.