



## William Clarke Summers

September 13, 1936 - November 20, 2014

Bill Summers was born on September 13, 1936 in Corvallis, Oregon to Robert Edward Summers and Dorothy Mae (Clarke) Summers. He grew up and attended school in the Twin Cities, graduating from University High School in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1954.

Bill completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Minnesota and earned a degree in mechanical engineering in 1959, as well as participating in NROTC. After graduating Bill served 2 years in the Navy on the coast of Maine as part of the Construction Battalion (“SeaBees”), where he helped construct a low frequency radio station designed to communicate with submarines under the polar ice cap.

Bill returned to University of Minnesota for a doctoral degree in Zoology, during which time he specialized in mollusks, and also worked for Minneapolis Honeywell on a part of the Apollo Space Project. While in graduate school, Bill met Karen Alice Hawkinson, to whom he was married on June 20, 1964 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

After completing his degree, Bill worked for five years at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Here he embarked on his lifelong specialty in and love of squid. Bill often spent days on fishing boats, especially trawlers, as part of his research. His respect and affection for the fishermen he

met included learning how to make and mend beautiful fishnets by hand.

In 1971, Bill relocated to Western Washington State College in Bellingham, Washington, where he taught at Huxley College of Environmental Studies and supervised the design and construction of Shannon Point Marine Center in Anacortes. During his 31-year career at Western Washington University, Bill continued to study the life cycles of squid, and went on sabbaticals to Sweden and Spain. Bill taught a variety of courses, including an Environmental Impact course in which students worked on solutions to real-world environmental issues in the local area.

Bill was a born teacher and lifelong learner whose all-encompassing curiosity made him a keen observer, an inventor of contraptions large and small, and a proud student of his family heritage in Oregon. He loved nature, especially all the creatures in it, and passed this love on to all the members of his family. He possessed a wry sense of humor, and enjoyed jokes and pranks. He was happiest peering into a tide pool, tramping outside, in any kind of boat, or lost in one of the myriad of books he devoured during his lifetime.

Bill was a faithful member of Saint James Presbyterian Church, and served in a number of leadership roles. He belonged to several organizations during his life, including the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, the American Association of University Professors, and the Audubon Society. He was an activist for the environment, as well as for numerous peace and justice causes. He expressed and advocated for his deep convictions, regardless of the scale or the consequences. As a devoted husband and father, Bill supported his wife and daughters in pursuing their passions and interests whatever they might be. During the last years of his life, he showed great resiliency and persistence in facing the after-effects of a stroke.

Bill is survived by his wife, Karen Summers, his daughters Kirstin (Robin

Anderson) and Ingrid Summers (Jean-François Duclos), god-daughters Sarah (Cameron Osborne) and Jill Teasley, and by Astrid Osborne. He is also survived by his brother Robert Summers (Andrea Summers), three nieces and one nephew, and numerous great nieces and nephews. Bill's family is deeply grateful to all those who helped care for him, especially: San Juanita Meza, Mary Michelutti, Ana Guevara, his doctors, and the staff at the Mount Baker Care Center.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to: Saint James Presbyterian Church, 910 14th Street, Bellingham, WA 98225, or the North Cascades Audubon Society, P.O. Box 5805, Bellingham, WA 98227-5805.

A memorial service will be held on Monday December 8th at 2:00 p.m. at Saint James Presbyterian Church.

# Tribute Wall

LL

“ I found Bill to be one of the most thoughtful, sensible, upbeat, and rational people on campus. I admired his enthusiasm and energy, and greatly enjoyed hearing him describe his absolute fascination for squid. This last season I missed seeing him at farmer’s market, where we would exchange brief updates on what our children were doing. I hope this does not sound perverse, but I’d like to imagine that Bill is now in some happy place, surrounded by blinking and flashing squid, who are telling him endless jokes and explaining all about their life in the deep.

*We’ve all lost one really bright, talented, nice person.*

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**Lou Lippman** - November 20, 2014 at 12:00 AM

VC

“ I worked in the Geology Department at Western from 1983-2012. I always enjoyed visiting with Bill in the hallways of the Environmental Studies Building and on campus. He was so friendly and so interested in other people and their thoughts and how they were doing. He’ll surely be missed.

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**Vicki Critchlow** - November 20, 2014 at 12:00 AM