



Mr. William Alan Emslie

MAR 3, 1949 - SEP 1, 2023



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Abridged Obituary: William Allan Emslie Bill Emslie (née William Allan Emslie, March 3, 1949) signaled off for the last time at the Kitty Askins Hospice Center in Goldsboro, North Carolina, Friday, September 1st, 2023. Being born at the Yale New Haven Hospital, Connecticut to New England parents, Elinor Whitney Kingsbury and Lloyd John Emslie, raised first in Dover Delaware and later in Garden City Long Island, and a graduate of New England College, Bill was a true New Englander and a man who loved the ocean coast. At the core of his being, Bill was brave, fiercely devoted, and he was committed to serving the country he loved in the United States Military. Most notable of his military responsibilities were leading the PACAF 5th Air Force Life Support Squadron, serving as an F-4E Weapons System Operator, and working as an Air Force Liaison Officer to the 101st Airborne Division of the Army. Notably, Bill completed over 200 airplane jumps as a Ranger. He retired as an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel. Overall, Bill demonstrated legendary courage, extreme physical and mental strength, and an ability to survive in dire conditions. He was an avid outdoorsman who loved to hunt and fish, with a reputation for marksmanship. Bill also accomplished the Marine Corps Marathon in 1984, as well as completing a remote master's degree from USC. Bill is survived by his sister, Margaret (Peggy) Whitney Emslie, his brother, Robert Sim Emslie, his daughter, Elizabeth (Ellie) Emslie Stevens, his son-in-law, Dustin Daniel Stevens, and his three grandchildren: Ruth Whitney Stevens (12), Zaiyah Cantwell Stevens (9), and Paolo Shepherd Stevens (1.5). He is also survived by his dear North Carolina family-like friends, Rusty and Joe Davies, as well as Joe's sister, Barbara Grinelle (who still resides in New York). He is also survived by many neighbors in Dudley, whom he loved, and whose love for him was genuine.



Full-Length Obituary: William Allan Emslie Just before the sun came up, Bill Emslie (née William Allan Emslie, March 3, 1949) signaled off for the last time at the exceptionally loving Kitty Askins Hospice Center in Goldsboro, North Carolina, Friday, September 1st, 2023. That he was to die that night was his own sincere request, an authentic prayer (though perhaps his first and only). Frustrated that neither the hospital nor hospice center would let him die sooner by any other means (and evidently in great discomfort), he finally resorted to asking God, whom he deemed of higher management, that He would take him “that night.” Though he was outspokenly not a man of prayer or faith, his prayer was answered. For the last week of his life, he enjoyed drinking diet Pepsis and coffee-- with one cream and one sugar-- brought to him by nurses with endless kindness and southern charm. Even his brother, Robert Emslie, his daughter Elizabeth (Ellie) Emslie Stevens, and his only grandson, 1 year-old Paolo Shepherd Stevens, got to partake in the sweetness of delivering coffees and other non-hospital “contraband” to him on his deathbed, such as his favorite nail clippers and generic antihistamines. During this tender time, Bill was very much “himself,” as irascible as ever, (which made it easier not to cry at his bedside). He was acutely aware of others’ inadequacies as well as up to date and enraged about the meta political climates of the world. Moreover, he was as determined as ever to live, and die, with bravado, as the captain of his own ship. At the heart of Bill’s intensities, his oft exasperated cantankerousness, and his periodic vitriol- fueled by a life of semi-hermitism- was a deep-felt desire for justice. Greatly valuing the humility, honesty, and hard work of others, in his heart was a desire to champion and fight for the weak and to remember and honor the forgotten. He despised arrogance and pride, selfishness and greed, and was at peace when he was with people you might call, “the salt of the Earth.” Furthermore, at the heart of his grizzly façade was a sentimental poet. For birthdays and anniversaries, he would often send original hand-written poems, with words so gently and thoughtfully crafted as to invoke salt-water eyes, even in the most stoic of readers. On special occasions, he would even compose song lyrics, which he’d bellow out in his inimitable deep and smooth baritone. In addition to his sentimental side, Bill was also wont to indulge in what was at time mischievous, at times sardonic sense of humor, with which he would entertain family and friends through his jokes, antics, and storytelling. Those who had the privilege of truly knowing Bill, were aware that beneath the storm on the surface was, on the one hand, reservoirs of spirited banter, and on the other, a profound gulf of thoughtfulness and love. Being born at the Yale New Haven Hospital, Connecticut to New England parents, Elinor Whitney Kingsbury and Lloyd John Emslie, raised first in Dover Delaware and later in Garden City Long Island, and a graduate of New England College, Bill was a true northerner and a man who loved the ocean coast. That he would spend the last 25 years of his life in the countryside of the south- the deep south- made him a beloved paradox in the country: a man of unchallenged new-York grit cozied up by Carolina lakes and down-home folk. The paradox didn’t end here, though, since Bill’s story was



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not simply one of “north and south,” and nor was it simply one of “gruff and sweet.” At the core of his being, Bill was brave, fiercely devoted, and he was committed to serving the country he loved in the United States Military. Most notable of his military responsibilities were leading the PACAF 5th Air Force Life Support Squadron, serving as an F-4E Weapons System Operator, and working as an Air Force Liaison Officer to the 101st Airborne Division of the Army. Notably, Bill completed over 200 airplane jumps as an Army Ranger. He retired as an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel. Overall, Bill demonstrated legendary courage, extreme physical and mental strength, and an ability to survive in dire conditions. Bill also accomplished the Marine Corps Marathon in 1984, as well as completing a remote master’s degree from USC. In his free time, Bill was an avid outdoorsman, who loved to hunt and fish, especially enjoying the wilds of North Carolina, Georgia and even Japan. Most memorable, though, and treasured of Bill’s habitations was Alaska, the wild north, from the rugged tundra to the serene deep glassy sounds, Bill relished in the untouched-ness of it, gloried in its remoteness and was made alive by the exigencies of survival. If I listen closely to my heart, I can still hear him singing his own lyrics to “North to Alaska,” as he boated across Prince William Sound. Bill is survived by his sister, Margaret (Peggy) Whitney Emslie, who, born 15 months his junior, was much like a twin to him, his brother, Robert Sim Emslie, his daughter, Elizabeth (Ellie) Emslie Stevens, his son-in-law, Dustin Daniel Stevens, and his three grandchildren: Ruth Whitney Stevens (12), Zaiyah Cantwell Stevens (9), and Paolo Shepherd Stevens (1.5). He is also survived by his dear North Carolina family-like friends, who were also New Yorkers in the South, Rusty and Joe Davies, as well as Joe’s sister, Barbara Grinelle (who still resides in New York), of whom he mused about travelling with until the end. He is also survived by many salt-of-the-Earth neighbors in Dudley, whom he loved, and whose love for him was genuine. Bill requested that his ashes be scattered in the San Pedro Channel between the mainland coast of Southern California and Catalina Island in a Hawaiian style paddle-out. He suggested that we wait until the youngest grandchild is old enough to participate. Thus, family and friends can stay-tuned for details about this event to honor and celebrate Bill’s life in the years to come.



Tribute Wall

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Apostle Dr. Deniece Cole sent a virtual gift in honor of William.

September 21 at 9:24 PM



Deborah Hobbs sent a virtual gift in honor of William.

September 8 at 8:49 AM





Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring William by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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