

Remembrance at memorial service for William Hull

by Barbara Park

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For those of you who don't know me, my name is Barbara Park and my mother was a 1st cousin to Bill's wife Carolyn. That may seem a fairly far connection to those of you from large families, but with a family as small as ours, you cherish the few relatives that you have.

When I was a child, the whole family would gather for Christmas dinner at the Oak Street home of my great aunt and Bill's mother-in-law, Mabel Wose. He always considered it somewhat of a miracle to have been included in that group. He often said that if his father-in-law, who he always referred to as Dr. Wose, had still been alive, he would never have been able to snag Carolyn as a wife. Dr. Wose was very protective of his daughters.

At these gatherings I remember (through a small child's viewpoint) listening to the adults talk and was always impressed with them as an amazingly intelligent, worldly, sophisticated group of people – much more so than other adults in my childhood sphere. What I came to appreciate in my adulthood was that all of that and more was true. In addition, Bill's hallmark was that he was an incredibly gracious person. When you came into his presence, at his home or at a gathering, he always greeted you warmly and made you feel that he was delighted to see you and that, to him, you were a valued and important person.

He was always the gracious host and really enjoyed taking care of people, especially cooking for people. As you may know, he was a wonderful cook. (I still cook eggplant exactly as he taught me.)

Bill and I had a delightful week together in Maine when he first returned home after breaking his leg in a fall in Harvard Square. Margot was worried about his being on his own and asked me to stay for a bit. Of course, he ended up taking care of me way more than I "took care" of him. He got up early and made the breakfast, the coffee. I remember consuming a great deal of wine and sea food on that visit and we had a grand time together.

Sometimes my family got to spend time with Bill, Margot (and Tavery once she came along) at Selkirk. One special time sticks in my mind. My youngest son, Ian was a potter in high school and college. Bill was thrilled! Finally there was someone in the family who understood and shared his passion for ceramics – specifically vessels! Margot and I watch with quiet amusement as Ian got down one pot after another. Each was handled, examined closely and discussed, Ian sharing how it would have been made and Bill supplying the biography of the maker and how he came to acquire the pot. After Ian graduated from college, Bill took him along on a trip to Denmark and Finland to meet some of the potters that he knew. What a gift that was to a young man. We always thought it was too bad that Ian came along so late in Bill's life as there was over 60 years between them.

I always think of the eldest member of the family as the memory keeper. Unfortunately Bill's memory was fading at the end, and now that he has gone, the mantle of memory keeper falls to me – a bit of an awesome responsibility. I will miss Bill deeply. The world is a bit colder, a bit emptier, a bit more impersonal, without his warm and gracious presence.