

WILLARD L. “BILL” HUYCK

Northfield - Willard “Bill” Huyck, 90, longtime Northfield resident, passed away Nov. 16, 2022, at the Wealshire residence in Medina, Minn.

Willard Leslie Huyck was born December 21, 1931, in Owatonna, Minn., to Ralph Leo and Esther Valborg (Larsen) Huyck. He lost his father at age 8. Esther and her two other sons — Art and Jim — persevered through tough times to raise young Bill.



Bill grew up in South Minneapolis. He attended Washburn High School, then transferred to Shattuck Academy in Faribault. Following in the footsteps of his brothers, Bill enrolled in Carleton College in 1949. Bill thrived at Carleton, making lifelong friends and participating in three sports. Following graduation in 1953, he enlisted in the Navy's Officer Candidate School. He was commissioned as an ensign and served as a naval aviator (navigator and bombardier) stationed on an aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean. Following military service, he returned to Carleton in 1957 where he was hired to be an assistant football coach. Bill loved the role of small college athletics and the joy and challenges of coaching bright students. In addition to supporting football, Bill was assigned coaching duties for hockey, track & field and cross country. To better coach the sport of hockey, he spent a winter shadowing famed University of Minnesota player, coach and NHL star John Mariucci.

On a group date in 1957 Bill met Gail Nash, whom he would marry two years later. Bill and Gail led a great life together that included travel and life abroad, summers at the Wisconsin cabin, and hosting dinner parties that would go until sunrise. They raised two sons in Northfield.

Bill's professional reputation was earned over many years. He sought the advice and friendship of the sport's top names. Bill was requested annually to officiate the NCAA D-I Indoor track meet in Detroit. He coached in Olympic development programs, and he attended and led numerous coaching clinics domestically and abroad. Bill's athletes earned dozens of NCAA All-American citations, including multiple NCAA individual championships, as well as All-American status before D-III was established. In 1980 Carleton won the NCAA D-III men's cross country championship in Rochester, New York. It remains the only Carleton team to ever win a NCAA title. Bill was inducted into the Carleton College Athletic Hall of Fame in 1979, the Minnesota Track & Field Hall of Fame in 2005, and the University of the South (Tennessee) Athletic Hall of Fame in 2019.

Bill's athletes often remark about his calm and encouraging manner. And although his teams consistently finished at or near the top in conference and national competitions, he subscribed to a "big tent" philosophy that encouraged students of all athletic abilities to participate. Bill's curiosity spanned virtually all subjects, and he held academics and faculty in high regard. The respect was mutual; he was invited to be Carleton's first, and perhaps only, coach to serve on its Faculty Committee, a role he was very proud of. Bill always honored invitations to attend his students' senior capstone academic projects called "Comps" or Comprehensive presentations. From 1977 to 1981, he took a break from coaching when he was asked to serve as Carleton's Dean of Admissions. He succeeded in increasing both Carleton's academic selectivity and its athletics program success during this period.

In 1984 Bill left Carleton to become Athletic Director at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn., where he led the fundraising and design of the new athletic complex, and the resurgence of "Sewanee" men's and women's athletic programs. After retiring from Sewanee in 1996, Bill and Gail returned to Northfield where he served one year as St Olaf College's interim Athletic Director.

Retirement didn't last long. Carleton track and cross country head coaches Donna and Dave Ricks invited him to assist them. In this part-time role Bill continued coaching until the age of 87. He derived joy — and continued high-level coaching successes —

interacting with young men and women during this time. Bill loved his family, the people of Northfield, his students, and the extended community of coaches he came to know. Although quietly competitive, he never spoke of other teams or coaches as opponents. They were his friends. He championed the underdogs in life, whether athletes or people leading ordinary lives. He preached patience, persistence and decency.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents; his wife of 58 years, Gail Huyck; half-brothers James Winter (Fresno, Calif.) and Arthur Winter (Rio Verde, Ariz). He is survived by sons Tom Huyck (Kathleen) of St Louis Park, Minn. and Jay Huyck (Tammy) of Charlotte, NC; grandsons Anthony, Donovan and Willard; niece Susan Winter of New York; and nephew Prescott Winter of Great Barrington, Mass.

The family extends its recognition of the caring staff at Benedictine Retirement Community and Wealshire of Medina. Donations to the [Alzheimer's Association](#) of MN are suggested.

The family is planning an informal memorial event in Northfield, in the spring, for friends, family and former students. An announcement will appear in the Northfield News.