

Dr. William R. Laney



William Laney, aged 91, peacefully passed away on Nov. 14, 2019. He most recently had been in memory care in an Eden Prairie senior facility.

Bill was born in Kendallville, Ind., and attended Fort Wayne North High School. He was a terrific athlete, excelling in track and basketball - so well he earned a basketball scholarship to Stanford in 1946. Academia became more important to Bill (as did his future bride, Sally) and he transferred to the University of Oregon, graduating in 1950. He moved on to dental school there, earning his DMD in 1954. Concurrently, he began his military service, first as a Seaman in the U.S. Naval Reserve and later as a first Lieutenant, USAF and still later, Captain and Acting Chief of Prosthodontics at Warren AFB in Cheyenne, Wyo., from 1954 to 1956.

While in Oregon, he was married to Sally Ann Boutin and the couple had two children, Bob and Debbie, there.

The family moved to Iowa City in 1956, where Bill completed his residency at the University of Iowa, earning his Prosthodontics Certificate. After two years in Iowa City, (another child, Jeff, was born there) the family moved to New York City, where he earned a Postdoctoral grant from the American Cancer Society to study Maxillofacial Prosthodontics for Cancer and Allied Diseases. Concurrently, he started a private practice in prosthodontics back in Portland, Ore., where their fourth child, Diane, was born.

In 1960, he moved the family to Rochester and joined the Mayo Clinic section of Dentistry and Oral Surgery specializing in Prosthodontics and Osseointegration. He went on to an exemplary career there with numerous awards both in practice and instruction. He was on the faculty at Mayo as well as the University of Minnesota Dental school. His Curriculum Vitae is beyond impressive. Highlights include chairing the Mayo Department of Dentistry from 1976 to 1985; periods of serving as President of numerous organizations including the Academy of Denture Prosthetics, the Academy of Osseointegration, the American Academy of Maxillofacial Prosthetics, the American Board of Prosthodontics, the American Cleft Palate Association and the Minnesota Prosthodontic Society. Through his leadership in the field of Osseointegration, he is widely recognized as one of the key pioneers in what has become the entirely new field of dental implants. Over his career, Bill authored or co-authored numerous books, research

papers and other publications all in the interest of improving the quality of life for tens of thousands of patients.

After his retirement from Mayo Clinic, he and Sally moved to Rio Verde, Ariz. He stayed active professionally by editing the Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Implants for Quintessence Publishing. Sally died in 1994. Bill married LaDonna McGee in 1996. Bill and LaDonna spent many years traveling, spending time with family and supporting Bill's beloved Minnesota Gophers. He had season tickets in both football and basketball since 1960.

Bill was preceded in death by his wife, Sally; parents, Loy and Ila; sister, Patsy Fraleigh; and great-grandson, Mason. He is survived by wife, LaDonna; children, William Robert, Jr. (Susan), Debra Lynn (Steven Anger), Jeffrey Michael (Christine) and Diane Elizabeth (Joe Elmgren); nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Memorials may be made to the William R. Laney Endowment for Prosthodontic Education at Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.org/development or Mayo Clinic - Department of Development, 200 First Street SW, Rochester, MN 55905.