



## Willis Worthington Marshall

June 30, 1928 - October 8, 2014

WILLIS WORTHINGTON MARSHALL JR, 86, of New Bloomfield MO, died October 8, 2014 at the Kansas City Hospice House. Born June 30, 1928 in Birmingham AL to Alberta Ann Drinkwater and Willis Worthington Marshall, both of Charleston MO.

He attended the Marion Military Institute from high school through his Associates degree in Pre-med. He completed his Bachelors and Masters degrees at Auburn University in Dairy Agriculture and Agricultural Economics. He then accepted a grant from the University of Missouri Columbia for his Doctorate work in Sociology.

December 18, 1954 he married his wife of 32 years, Ann Susan Bacon. They had four children, Susan, George, Elizabeth and Laura.

December 5, 1990 he met the love of his life, best friend and soul mate, Barbro Lucas. They were together until her death in 2013.

Will Marshall was a public servant his entire working life. First serving in the United States Army, the Army Reserves, he became a Veteran of Foreign War serving in the Navy during the Korean War. After University he worked for the state of Missouri and then Federal Government until his retirement in 1991.

He was most proud of three professional accomplishments. During the War on Poverty, he initiated and won a Federal grant to bring the Neighborhood Youth Corps program to Missouri, then served as program's director over 1,500 supervisors and 15,000 members. As Director of the Missouri Department of Aging he took the Older Adults Transportation System from its start serving

one county in 1970, to the statewide system serving 80 counties in 1973. The yellow O.A.T.S. buses are still serving today. He was the head of Federal Region VII Family Planning during the early 1980s when these programs were under social and financial attack. As Title X funding was being slashed, he found the loop holes and formed the relationships to keep the clinics going in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska. He was an excellent director who always encouraged, recognized, and promoted talent. He gladly took on the fight for the important social issues of his time: civil rights, equal rights, public health, and the freedom to thrive as informed individuals.

Willis Marshall is survived by his children, Susan, George, Elizabeth, Laura Marshall, their mother, Ann Sophia Marshall, his grandchildren Caitlin Campbell, Katherine and Isabel Marshall Kramer, Barbro's children John Lucas, Eva Wilken, Ann Michael, her grandchildren Anders and Arne Wilken, Stephan and Anika Sink, and the friends that he shared so many interests with. He is survived by what he loved and valued the longest and the most, his land in the central Ozarks, Callaway County.

Will's interests ran the gamut. Passionate about restoring and protecting prairie lands, he founded Friends of the Prairie Garden in 2004, a nonprofit corporation that is today the Prairie Garden Trust. To ensure biodiversity through seed preservation, he was the first and a life-long member of Seed Savers International. He served eleven years on the board of Missouri Family Health Council, five as Board President. His love of restoring military jeeps lead him to co-found two chapters of the Military Vehicle Collectors Club: the Kansas City Hell On Wheels chapter, and the Mid-Missouri Santa Fe chapter. He served as Honor Guard with the VFW in Fulton, Missouri.

Will lived life his way, right to the last breath. Of sharp wit and intellect, he continued to ask "why" and seek answers up until his final days. Well versed in philosophy, religions and war, he was quick to point out that he was a "student" of these, not a teacher or proponent. Outspoken. A champion of local democratic principles with no interest in party politics, he wrote copious

letters to his elected representatives. Never at a loss for words, his letters to the Fulton Sun can be read on-line. Will wore many hats, literally and figuratively. Crafty, he got a lot done behind the scenes. A rabid reader and never far from a FM or short wave radio, he was well informed about the world beyond his beloved rural Missouri. He had an encyclopedic knowledge. He was a gifted story teller and family historian. He loved Irish and Gaelic music and supported public radio. He grew a huge garden every year of his adult life, picked okra and made loofa sponges.

For over twenty years, Will fed thousands of hummingbirds, recording dates of first arrival in the spring, pounds of sugar consumed and when the last bird left in the fall. How appropriate that on this years' Missouri Conservation calendar, the notation on the day before Dad died said "most ruby-throated hummers have left Missouri". Dad, we love you, and to quote one of your favorite songs, "So Long, It's Been Good To Know You".

Will's life will celebrated in Kansas City November 2, 2014 at 12:00 noon at Lakeside Nature Center, 4701 Gregory Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64132. A second celebration will be held December 6, 2014 at his home in New Bloomfield.

Memorial donations may be given to KCUR Public Radio in Kansas City, MO; KOPN Radio in Columbia, MO; and Planned Parenthood.

# Tribute Wall

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“ *I am grateful for the life of Mr. Marshall. Thanks to his service and to the service of others in our armed forces, my family and I have been able to lead our lives in freedom and peace.*

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**Bob in Grandview, Missouri** - October 20, 2014 at 10:01 AM