



William Robert Gregory of Chesterton, Indiana, formerly of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan died unexpectedly in his home on Wednesday, November 17th, 2021. William Gregory was born on June 1st, 1939 in Detroit, Michigan to Charles and Ann Gregory. As the oldest of nine children, Bill recognized his role within his family and was always a hard worker. Bill's first job was that of paperboy for what is today the Detroit Free Press. He also worked at Detroit Bank and Trust, now known as Comerica Bank, as a messenger boy. Bill's father worked at the bank and Bill was known as "Charlie's Boy". Bill shared his earnings with his parents to help the family. Bill graduated from Holy Redeemer High School in Detroit in 1957 where he was a member of the baseball team. After putting himself through school, Bill earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Wayne State University in

1963. He began his adult working career as an associate auditor in the Detroit office of Arthur Anderson and he became a certified public accountant while at Arthur Anderson in 1967. It was on a client audit in Manistee, Michigan where he met the love of his life Mary Louise Stypa. Bill and Mary Lou were married in Manistee, Michigan on October 8th of 1966 and settled in Detroit to begin their amazing life together.

After serving with the Michigan National Guard on the streets of Detroit in the 1967 riots, Bill searched for opportunities to leave the city and also cultivate his love of the outdoors. "God's Country" called and Bill left Arthur Anderson as a Senior Auditor in April of 1968 to become the Treasurer of Edison Sault Electric Company in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. At Edison Sault, Bill advanced to Controller, Vice President of Finance and Executive Vice President. In May of 1972 Bill was elected President of Edison Sault by the company's board of directors. At the age of 33, he was the youngest public utility president in the state of Michigan. Bill would later say he asked for two things when he was elected President of Edison Sault; "The wisdom to know what is right and the courage to do it". Bill would lead Edison Sault through the inflation of the 1970's, the closing of the Kincheloe Air Force base in 1977, the recessions of 1982 and 1991 and until the sale of Edison Sault to Wisconsin Energy and his retirement in 1998. In his 26 years as President of Edison Sault, there was never a single employee layoff.

Involvement in business and community affairs was a trademark of Bill's life and with the support of his wife and family, he was able to make a tremendous impact on his community throughout his life. He viewed that involvement as a responsibility and a privilege. Bill was a past Treasurer of the Soo Kiwanis Club and past President of the Michigan Electric and Gas Association. He served as a Board Member, Treasure and Coach for the Soo Michigan Hockey Association. He served the Sault Area Public Schools as an advisory committee member and in 1980 was the chief spokesman at a public meeting encouraging the passing of a millage to fund the extension of the school day. He was the Chairman of the 1989 United Way of Chippewa County campaign, which exceeded its goal by 17%. He fostered a partnership between Edison Sault and the City of Sault Ste. Marie for construction of the boat launch at Ashmun Bay on the upper St. Mary's river, waterfront parks and the downtown marina building. He served on the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Council. Bill was one of the founding members of the Soo Area Sportsman's Club and served as Board Member, President and Treasurer over the years. His favorite Sportsman's Club event was the annual wild game diner. He was director of First of America Bank, Northern Michigan and First of America Bank, Michigan.

Bill was a friend of Lake Superior State University and generations of past LSSU presidents, faculty, staff and the hockey program. He was Chairman of the Operation Ice Fund Drive in 1973 and 1974 which led to the eventual construction of the James Norris Center on the LSSU campus. He was an avid Laker Hockey fan recognizing the value the university provided to the community. Bill's love of fishing, LSSU, and his position at Edison Sault lead to a partnership with LSSU, the Soo Area Sportsman Club and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for the establishment of the LSSU Aquatic Research Laboratory at the east end of the Edison Sault hydroelectric plant and the introduction of Chinook and Atlantic Salmon to the lower St. Mary's river. That partnership and the LSSU aquatics laboratory is still growing today. In 1986 LSSU awarded Bill its Distinguished Citizen

Award and in 1992, for his efforts in developing the fishery of the St. Mary's River, Bill was honored with the Fisheries Conservationist of the Year Award by the Michigan United Conservation Club. Bill served on LSSU's Board of Regents from 1994 to 2002. In 1991, Northern Michigan University presented Bill with its President's Award for Distinguished Citizenship. One of Bill's mantras was "act enthusiastic and you'll be enthusiastic". He displayed that every day.

Bill remained dedicated to his Catholic faith his entire life. Bill and Mary Lou were active members and financial supporters of the Catholic churches in each of the cities they called home. Bill was a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Bill was always involved in the lives of his children. It seems Bill visited every hockey rink in Michigan and the province of Ontario, Canada, as well as numerous high schools while watching his sons play hockey and his daughter's play basketball and run track. Bill's interest in fishing knew no bounds and Sault Ste. Marie and its unique location within the Great Lakes provided the endless opportunities to create lasting memories with his loved ones. The number of whitefish and perch taken from the upper St. Mary's River and Brimley Bay with his family and friends are too numerous to count. Sharing "the catch" with dear friends over a meal and laughs was icing on the cake. Later in his working career and early retirement, Bill spent many mornings and evenings on northern Lake Huron in his 30' Tiara, the "Mary Lou Too", trolling for Salmon. The vessels namesake was often by his side. Bill and his wife Mary Lou would leave Sault Ste. Marie in 2011 to be closer to their daughters and grandchildren. Bill and Mary Lou also had the great fortune to explore bayside and ocean fishing while enjoying winters in Florida during retirement.

Bill is survived by his loving wife of 55 years Mary Louise, son Larry (Tracy) Gregory of Kingwood, Texas, and grandchildren William, Margo, Andrew and Elaine, son Peter (Lynn) Gregory of Keller, Texas, and grandchildren Ella, Derek and Carissa, daughter Victoria (David) Jankowski of Bloomington, Illinois, daughter Valeria (Chad) Van Kley of Chesterton, Indiana, and grandchildren Matthew, Kaitlyn, Allison and Victoria, daughter Joanna (Kyle) Novak of Downers Grove, Illinois, and grandchildren Evelyn and Vivian.

Bill is also survived by his siblings, Ralph Gregory, Karen (Mark) Blair, Donald (Mary) Gregory, Dennis (Therese) Gregory, Patrick (Charlotte) Gregory, John Gregory, Steven (Pattie) Gregory and Thomas (Charlene) Gregory. Bill was preceded in death by his parents Charles and Ann Gregory.

Family and friends are invited to attend a Celebration of Life gathering on Friday, June 24th at 11:00am in Manistee, Michigan. A funeral mass will take place at Divine Mercy Parish, 249 Sixth St. in Manistee, Michigan at 11 am. In lieu of flowers, gifts in Bill's memory can be made to the William R. Gregory Scholarship via the Lake Superior State University Foundation, 650 W. Easterday Ave., Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan 49783.

The Herbert Funeral of Manistee is in charge of funeral arrangements.