



Dr. William "Bill" Sanders

April 26, 1942 - March 16, 2017

Dr. William (Bill) Lester Sanders of Columbia, Tennessee, passed away Thursday, March 16, 2017 of natural causes at Williamson Medical Center, surrounded by his wife June Rivers Sanders, daughter Sarah Sanders Teague, son Will Sanders, and his stepsons Brian Rivers and Mark Rivers.

Sanders was born the son of Lester and Sara Sanders in Shelbyville, Tennessee, on April 26, 1942. He grew up in Bedford County with his two sisters Sylvia Sanders Pinson and Mary Grace Curlee, as well as his cousin Charlene Pickle Judd. Bill was a graduate of The University of Tennessee, where he received a bachelors of Science degree in animal science in 1964, and a doctorate in Statistics and Quantitative Genetics in 1968. Throughout his time as a student at The University of Tennessee, Sanders was an active member of Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity.

Beginning in 1972, Sanders created and led a statistical and consulting group for the Institute of Agricultural Research for The University of Tennessee system. Over the next 28 years, Sanders worked with scientists to plan experiments and analyze the resulting data on research projects ranging from agronomy to physics. One of his research projects modeled the nutrient flow in the Peace River system in Florida, which proved that the environmental degradation in the Gulf was not a function of the development along the west coast as was previously thought but rather was a result of the phosphate mining activity in Central Florida. Other projects were as wide ranging as

developing a forecasting system for Bike Athletic to improve forecasts for over 2,500 different inventory units to working with a longtime friend to develop a process that improved calibration of an invention that measures fiber properties.

Sanders also served as an adjunct professor of statistics for the College of Business and later became the director of the Value-Added Research and Assessment Center at The University of Tennessee. One of many highlights of his career was a study that demonstrated the lasting effects of educational practices on future student performance. As a result of this research, Sanders developed the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS), also known as the Educational Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), a method used to measure a district, school, and teacher's effect on student performance by tracking the year-to-year progress of students against themselves over their school career with various teachers' classes.

Sanders went on to be the senior manager of Educational Value Added Assessment Services at SAS Institute© in Cary, North Carolina. Sanders stood for a hopeful view that teacher effectiveness dwarfs all other factors as a predictor of student academic growth. His position challenged decades of assumptions that student family life, income, or ethnicity has more effect on student learning. Sanders believed, simply put, that educational influence matters and teachers matter most.

Since 1992, Sanders' work has been the foundation of the accountability system in Tennessee. Sanders became a national leader in value-added assessments and his work is key to education policy discussion across the country. It has changed the way teachers assess students, principals assess teachers, superintendents assess principals, and school boards assess superintendents. Sanders work was dedicated to enabling parents, educators,

and lawmakers to better assess the effectiveness of educational practice.

For his many achievements in the field of education, the Education Commission of the States named Dr. William L. Sanders the 2015 recipient of the James Bryant Conant Award, one of the most prestigious honors in the field. In doing so, Sanders joined an esteemed list of past recipients, including Thurgood Marshall, E. D. Hirsch, Fred (Mr.) Rogers and Lamar Alexander.

Throughout all of this, his family was the constant joy of his life. He was also an avid golfer, quail hunter, and breeder of English setters. Fitting his family genealogy within the broader context of the settling of his country and state filled many days. Always observing and questioning, his goal was to learn something new every day.

Sanders is survived by his wife June Rivers Sanders and the Pallbearers: daughter Sarah Sanders Teague and her husband Matthew Teague; son Dr. William Gordon Sanders and his wife Reetu Gowdar Sanders; stepson Brian Lee Rivers and his wife Tracy Blackwell Rivers; Mark Evan Rivers and his wife Angela Barrett Rivers. He is also survived by sister Sylvia Sanders Pinson; sister Mary Grace Curlee and her husband David Curlee; and cousin Charlene Pickle Judd. Sanders also leaves behind eight grandchildren, all of whom are Honorary Pallbearers: Ava Jean Teague, Locke Jameson Teague, Rohan William Sanders, Sonia Lucille Sanders, Evan Barrett Rivers, Rogan James Rivers, Dylan Reed Rivers, and Ewan Jude Rivers. Additional Honorary Pallbearers include his brothers of the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity and The Old Golfers of Graymere, including Waymon Hickman, Joe High, Alvin Moore, J. B. Shepard, Stan Keely, Richard Kennedy, Dan Wheeler,

Julius Johnson, and others.

Visitation will take place at Feldhaus Memorial Chapel in Shelbyville, TN on Saturday March 18, 2017, from 4 pm – 7 pm. A celebration of life will follow on March 19, 2017, at the Shiloh United Methodist Church in Wheel, TN at 2 pm.

Dr. Sanders believed that the purpose of all education is to provide more students with more choices in life. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in memory of Dr. Sanders made to the Shiloh United Methodist Church Scholarship Fund c/o Jennifer Trott, 270 Card Road, Shelbyville, TN 37160. The Shiloh UMC Scholarship Fund aims to provide the community members support for community college, university, trade school or other opportunities.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 18. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Feldhaus Memorial Chapel
2022 North Main St.
Shelbyville, TN 37160
(931) 684-8356
feldhausgowensmith@gmail.com
<http://feldhausgowensmith.com/>

Celebration of Life

MAR 19. 2:00 PM (CT)

Shiloh United Methodist Church
2547 TN-64 Scenic
Shelbyville, TN 37160
(931) 684-0972

Tribute Wall

BV

“ *Bill 'Pierre' Sanders. Never forget the day, AGR brother Stratton Bone nick named you Pierre. Going to class on a rainy day with a borrowed Air Force rain coat and rain cap you looked like a French painter. Thus Pierre. And it stuck, along with your friendship to so many. Bird dogs, golf and anything Tennessee is how I'll remember you. We had a lot of fun and wonderful memories. RIP from ole Big Guy, Bob Vantrease.*

Bob Vantrease - March 21, 2017 at 03:50 AM

SC

“ *Well Pierre. The time has come to kick another top rail of the door casing and win five bucks! I need some cigarettes. Oh those days,,,,,long gone but not forgotten. I have to let you know how much I respect you Ole Pal. Between the bird dogs and horse shoes, we did manage to get some work done. Thanks to you, I fully understand an Orthogonal Contrasts.
My deepest respect and sympathy goes out to the family. Bill is one of a kind...an outlier.
I love you brother even though the years have passed and work kept us apart, you,are still my friend.*

*My Sympathy.
.Sam Winfree
Cookeville.*

sam winfree. cookeville - March 20, 2017 at 09:26 PM

AC

“ Anna Clanton lit a candle in memory of Dr. William "Bill" Sanders



anna clanton - March 18, 2017 at 10:42 AM



“ Fiery Lily and Rose was purchased for the family of Dr. William "Bill" Sanders.



March 17, 2017 at 05:20 PM

SW

“ Bill was one of the smartest folks I have ever known. Yet, as brilliant as he was, he was always so gracious to others. And, he listened to you as if you were the smartest person in the world.

He and June were perfectly matched. You and the family will be in my prayers.

Sarah and Charlie White

Sarah White - March 17, 2017 at 04:49 PM

AP

Well said. One trip back "home" to Centerville, his step-father-in-law told me, "Well, I played golf yesterday with one of the smartest men in Tennessee." Indeed! I'd amend that to say, "one of the smartest men in the nation."

He's gone far too soon, but the contributions he made in so many fields is lasting.

Anne and Danny Powell, Oak Ridge

Anne Powell - April 10, 2017 at 03:50 PM

JG

“ *Jim and Ann Goodnight purchased the Enduring Grace for the family of Dr. William "Bill" Sanders.*



Jim and Ann Goodnight - March 17, 2017 at 04:06 PM

WB

“ *We will miss you, Bill. Beverly and Barry purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Dr. William "Bill" Sanders.*



We will miss you, Bill. Beverly and Barry - March 17, 2017 at 03:38 PM



“ *Serenity Wreath was purchased for the family of Dr. William "Bill" Sanders.*



March 17, 2017 at 03:16 PM

SH

“ Steve Herzog lit a candle in memory of Dr. William "Bill" Sanders



Steve Herzog - March 17, 2017 at 02:49 PM

SH

Truly sorry to hear about Dr. Sanders. He will be missed and I enjoyed our conversations about family. We will be keeping June and family in our thoughts and prayers. May God Bless.

Steve Herzog - March 17, 2017 at 02:51 PM

RD

My thoughts and prayers are with Bill's family and friends. Peace.
Robert Hopson

Robert J Hopson DDS - March 19, 2017 at 06:53 AM



“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Dr. William "Bill" Sanders.



March 17, 2017 at 02:19 PM

TS

“ The Harlin Family (Gregg, Deborah, Stephen & Shawn purchased the Emerald Garden Basket for the family of Dr. William "Bill" Sanders.



The Harlin Family (Gregg, Deborah, Stephen & Shawn -
March 17, 2017 at 01:59 PM

DH

“ You are in our thoughts, hearts, and prayers. I know that he and my mom are up there in heaven having a grand ole time catching up on everything! We will miss him. We wish we could be there but know that we are with you in spirit. Hugs and kisses to June and the family!
Love you all
The Harlin Family (Gregg, Deborah, Stephen and Shawn)

Deborah Harlin - March 17, 2017 at 01:07 PM

JH

“ Jean Harrison lit a candle in memory of Dr. William "Bill" Sanders



Jean Harrison - March 17, 2017 at 12:52 PM

JG

“ I will always treasure the wonderful conversations that I shared with Bill. His brilliant mind always amazed me because he could speak about statistics, school children's test scores, learning gains, hunting dogs, and the Lady Vols with the same depth of knowledge. He always made sure that his farm boy roots served him well and it was obvious how much pride and love he had for his Wheel community.

He contributed so much to Tennessee education which spread throughout the country. It was indeed an honor to call him "my friend."

Judy Goodwin

Judy Goodwin - March 17, 2017 at 12:21 PM

CG

“ I have lots of wonderful memories of Bill beginning in 1961 with the days we spent living in the AGR fraternity house at UT. While I was a fraternity pledge, he was my big brother and mentor. We developed a long lasting friendship. I spent many days golfing and quail hunting with Bill. On the golf course, he was also ways my golfing partner and we seemed to always win a little money from other UT faculty members. I along with many others will miss Bill.

Charlie Goan

Charlie Goan - March 17, 2017 at 12:13 PM

JL

“ I am honored to have worked with Bill for many years in North Carolina. I count him as a mentor and a friend, and his dedication to students and always doing the right thing was awe-inspiring. I'll never forget driving through a rainstorm and muddy road with Bill when he used his farm training to get us through the mud! I'll miss our political chats. He knew about everything! - Jill Leandro

Jill Leandro - March 17, 2017 at 11:54 AM

FM

“ I have two great memories of Bill. One, was his help with "things" statistical. Always ready to help and that help got me over many problems. Number two was playing golf. I still haven't figured out how I always lost even though I might have had a better score.; I plan on asking him that question again some day.

Frank Masincupp - March 17, 2017 at 10:41 AM

MS

“ Sorry to hear of the loss of Mr. Sanders.
Thinking and praying for the family during this
time. Barry, Melissa, & Ashley Shelton.



Melissa Shelton - March 17, 2017 at 09:27 AM

AB

“ I am very sorry to hear of Bill's passing. I spent many an enjoyable
lunch hour with him in Mabel's cafeteria at UT not only learning
about his work, but also about growing up in rural Tennessee. You
are in our thoughts and prayers.

Alan Barefield

Alan Barefield - March 17, 2017 at 08:31 AM

TL

*Bill's fraternity brothers fondly called him "Pierre" because he had the
courage to wear a french beret around campus. I never was sure
whether his intellect was a match for his sense of humor or vice versa.
Ann and I send our sincerest and deepest condolences. When our
friends hurt, we also hurt.*

Tom and Ann Looney

Tom Looney - March 17, 2017 at 07:19 PM

DR

*Bill had a brilliant mind, a competitive spirit and a down home manner
about him. It was my pleasure have him as a student and co-worker at
the Univ. of Tennessee Inst. of Agriculture from 1963 until the late
1990's. We shared many a coffee break at Mabel's. Don Richardson.*

Don Richardson - March 19, 2017 at 04:28 AM