



## Bertram Charles Willoughby

April 21, 1934 - September 16, 2021

Bertram (Bert) Charles Willoughby, age 87, died September 16, 2021. He was born April 21, 1934 in Santa Barbara, California to Bertram Alfred Noecker Willoughby and Jennie Lee Willoughby. He married Geraldine Willoughby on July 20, 1958 at First Presbyterian Church in Santa Barbara.

Bert was a romantic optimist who loved God, God's creation, family and music. He began playing music and singing as a boy. He went on to play in marching bands at Santa Barbara High School, and Cal Berkley. He sang in the church choir for more than 20 Years.

In college, Bert spent his summers working in the Yosemite backcountry maintaining trails and the forest. He loved working and living in his favorite place on earth. As an adult, he returned to Yosemite every May to see the Dogwoods bloom while recovering from yet another long tax season.

Bert loved young people and was energized introducing junior and senior high youth groups to God and God's creation. While backpacking in the Sierras, he demonstrated to generations of students from First Presbyterian Church Santa Barbara the "Willoughby No Sweat Pace". The reward for him was seeing teenagers become successful young adults and following God. He loved mentoring students at church and staff at work.

But his pride and joy of his life was his wife Geraldine (Geri) Willoughby and the family they raised together. He introduced his ever-expanding family to America with 2-4 week road trips across the country he loved. In addition to his three biological children, he and Geri opened their home to over 20 foster

children, usually teenagers. As those children became adults, he poured his energy into building his home, fondly known as “Willoughby World”. The backyard became a day camp for children and a place of fellowship for adults, welcoming people from church, the Salvation Army, and beyond.

Bert was always a kid at heart. He loved the circus and delighted in reserving a box each year to take a group of kids along with him to see the show. He loved the fun circus food; snow cones, cotton candy and popcorn! Geri gifted him with the machines to bring those circus treats to their home. For many years, summers in their backyard were filled with squeals from kids of all ages, enjoying these tasty delights and the magical world Bert had created: the 16-foot water slide, walking trail, zip line, treehouse and swinging bridge that entertained so many. Bert and Geri were happiest when they were sharing Willoughby World with others.

Bert actively used his skills as a Christian businessman as an elder and treasurer at First Presbyterian Church, and as a board member of Valle Verde, Friendship Manor and Isla Vista Christian Center. Bert retired after 40 years from Bartlett, Pringle and Wolf, CPA firm as managing partner.

Bert was a pillar of the business community and a leader at church, but he was most content at home serving cotton candy to church kids or snow cones to his grand kids. He transitioned from the board room to the youth room, from the choir room to the outdoor classroom with ease.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 64 years, Geraldine Willoughby. He is survived by his children; Bret Willoughby (Nancy), Bart Willoughby, Brenda Lilly (Glen), Sheila Henne (Rod), Shannon Williams (Richard), Joanie Lawson (Craig) Adrian Romero (Barbara) Ingrid Rivas (Fred), 13 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his mother and father-in-law, and his sister, Betty Alkire.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, December 18, 2021 at 1 pm at First Presbyterian Church, 21 E. Constance, Santa Barbara. Flowers may be sent to the church. Donations may be given to Salvation Army Camp Scholarship

for needy children in Santa Barbara County. <https://give-cas.salvationarmy.org/give/379346/#!/donation/checkout>

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

DEC 18. 1:00 PM (PT)

First Presbyterian Church  
21 E. Constance Ave.  
Santa Barbara, CA 93105  
<http://www.fpcsb.org>

# Tribute Wall

LB

“ Lotns Boyd lit a candle in memory of Bertram Charles Willoughby



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lotns boyd - January 12, 2023 at 01:36 PM

NM

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...” Bert, I have seen these attributes of the Holy Spirit reflected in everything you did.

*You were a great mentor and friend. You believed in my accounting career before I did. Thank you for all the time you spent editing my resumé, meeting at coffee shops just make sure I was ready for the next interview, the professional referrals and references but more importantly your love for our family.*

*These past 2 years you didn't know who we were but we know who you are. The same guy who gives kisses and hugs during each visit. We are sad to loose both you and Geri within 3 months but what a Legacy!*

*Your faith, love and generosity have impacted so many generations in Santa Barbara and beyond! You have served God's purpose, and you fell asleep. Well Done Bert. Rest well, we will miss you❤️ and Willoughby World will never be the same.*

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Nathalie Manyo - December 18, 2021 at 11:47 AM



“ Bert hired me for my first "real" job--doing gopher-work in his CPA office (filing, copying, running out for bagels and cream cheese, fill-in receptionist, etc.). What a wonderful boss to work for! His sense of humor and unceasingly positive attitude made working an office job a joy for this "prefer-to-be-outside" gal! Bert's long walk of obedience inspired ever so many to follow in his Savior's footsteps. His legacy lives on in countless others.

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**Kare Robertson** - November 29, 2021 at 01:07 PM