

BILL MILLER – MY UNCLE AND MY HERO

Let me begin by saying that I write these words with a very heavy heart and my sincerest condolences go out to Ian, Judy and Jane. They have lost a remarkable man and an extremely special father.

Bill was the eldest of three brothers, the middle one of whom was my late father John. Despite Bill moving to the USA when I was a very young boy, he was a frequent visitor back across the Pond, highlighting the importance he placed on family.

However, he really came to prominence in my life as I was approaching the end of my school education. In those days most students completed their A level studies and then stayed on for an extra 7th term to take the Oxbridge exam. After my A level results the school determined that I should take a shot at glory and they recommended Oxford and Merton College (I honestly do not recall the rationale). Naturally I shared this information with my father who then informed his elder brother. The message came back loud and clear – I was to apply to St Edmund Hall because it is the finest College in Oxford and Bill had studied there. It was the best decision ever made for me by someone else.

Upon my acceptance to the Hall, he was straight on the phone giving hearty congratulations and clearly thrilled that a member of the family was following in his footsteps. Upon hearing that I had been selected for the Oxford Cricket Varsity team in 1983, he jumped on a plane, attended the whole match and threw a family party in my honour at the Berkeley Hotel in London. We drew the game and I performed well, scoring 62 and 48, determined not to let the great man down. Looking back, I think the moment captured some of the most important things in his life – family, cricket, the Hall and Oxford.

He was Oxford through and through. I will never forget foolishly wearing a light blue tie at one of the many dinners we enjoyed over the years. He admonished me repeatedly throughout the evening for wearing Cambridge colours. Needless to say, I never made that mistake again.

In the late 80s I made my first visit to New York and attended the Teddy Hall Dinner in the Sky Club at the top of the PanAm building. This is an annual dinner for US based Aularians that Bill founded and never missed. In 2006 I myself moved to the US and have been a more regular attendee since. There will be a huge void when we hopefully reconvene at the New York Racquet Club in 2021.

Much has been said and written about Bill's generosity and philanthropic spirit, and rightly so. The William R Miller Building is the most obvious legacy, but there was so much more. All I will add is that Bill had an incredibly fulfilling and successful life, but he never lost sight of the vital importance his education had played in that success, most notably his time at Teddy Hall.

He was my Uncle, my hero and frankly my inspiration too. He was a true Titan of the Hall.

ANDREW MILLER SEH 1981