



## William "Bill" Schnell

May 26, 1948 - November 1, 2022

W J Schnell

Out of the night that covers me  
Black as the pit from pole to pole  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul

William J. Schnell's unconquerable soul parted ways with his body in the late morning of Tuesday, November 1, 2022, in Highland Park, Illinois. He was 74 years old. Surviving is his wife of 37 years, Diana Finley Schnell, his twin sons, William F. and Thomas, of Lake Forest, IL, and his daughter Jennifer who lives in Berkeley, California. He also leaves behind his sisters, Mary Ellen (the late Jack Jr.) Barry and Betsy (Kevin) Curran, along with nieces, nephews, and friends. Bill, as he was known by many, died an admired, accomplished, and well-traveled man. He deeply valued family and his sense of home. A longtime resident of Libertyville, he lived his final two years in Lake Forest with his wife and boys. While he was private and cerebral, he had a strong sense of humor, and he was an excellent singer. The poem *Invictus* by William Ernest Henley, referenced above, was especially meaningful to him and reflected the attitude with which he conducted his life. He was preceded in death by his parents, William O. and Jean Schnell.

Born in Chicago, IL on May 26, 1948, and raised in Park Ridge, Bill was an independent, adventurous, and playfully mischievous child. He was the instigator of many boisterous games with his sisters, notably one in which he would chase them around the basement on a homemade big wheel. He was proficient with fixing and tinkering with his old truck lovingly named “Bondo Buggy”. His penchant for building things and working with his hands no doubt set the stage for the incredibly accomplished career he made in his adult life.

Michel Foucault suggests that the boat is “the greatest reserve of the imagination”. It no doubt captured and held Bill’s. As a boy, he and his father built a small boat together in the garage. His mother Jean sewed the sail out of old bedsheets. The prized boat made its maiden voyage on a family trip to Lake Nebagamon in northern Wisconsin, where it promptly sank, but a seed of passion and relentless curiosity was surely planted. A formative canoe trip through the Boundary Waters as a teenager with his father, uncle, and cousin made for many an evening regaling friends and family with slides and stories for years to follow.

He spent many summer months throughout his life sailing and racing on Lake Michigan. The Chicago Yacht Club’s prestigious Race to Mackinac, known by many in the region and the sailing community at large as “the Mac” is the longest annual freshwater sailing race in the world. His avid participation in the race for over 25 years earned Bill (“Clyde” to his fellow crew) a membership to the Island Goat Sailing Society, and the venerable title of “Old Goat”.

When not on the water, he was happiest in his machine shop designing and prototyping medical devices. Earning his Bachelor’s in Biological Sciences with a Pre-Medicine declaration from the University of Illinois Chicago, he found a creative path to apply his sense of craft and critical problem-solving through making in the medical field. During his 24-year tenure at Baxter

Healthcare, he met and married his wife, Diana, and became a father of three. Later, he helped found and lead operations at Medisystems Research Corporation and went on to contribute research and development to the intellectual property holdings of LifeStream Technologies, NxStage Medical, Inc., and Fresenius Group. Over the course of his career, he was granted 93 medical patents that advanced dialysis, IV, and surgical technologies. At the time of his death, a handful more patents are pending. His spirit was that of a true inventor — he would pour over sketch pads and 3D models of ideas and prototypes in the evenings after dinner and in the early mornings before everyone was awake. He pursued his work with relentless drive, admirable dedication, and quiet humility. His leadership had a valuable impact on many that worked with him, and his family is incredibly proud to laud his accomplishments.

A visitation beginning at 1:00 pm followed by a memorial service at 3:00 pm will take place on Saturday, November 26, 2022, at Burnett-Dane Funeral Home, 120 W. Park Ave (Rt. 176, one block west of Milwaukee Ave.) in Libertyville, IL. For those that wish to attend virtually, a link is available on the funeral home website. Streaming will begin at 2:30 pm on the day of the service. The family would like to invite those close to Bill to their home shortly after the service to celebrate his life and share reflections with more information and address to be shared during the service. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to Equestrian Connection ([www.equestrianconnection.org](http://www.equestrianconnection.org)) would be appreciated. For more information, please visit [www.burnettdane.com](http://www.burnettdane.com) or call 847-362-3009. You may also share a memory at <https://www.burnettdane.com/obituaries/William-Schnell-2>.

To attend services virtually, link will be "live" beginning at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 26, 2022:

<https://client.tribucast.com/tcid/4451698981>

# Previous Events

## Visitation

NOV **26**. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM (CT)

Burnett-Dane Funeral Home  
120 West Park Avenue  
Libertyville, IL 60048  
(847) 362-3009

## Memorial Celebration

NOV **26**. 3:00 PM (CT)

Burnett-Dane Funeral Home  
120 West Park Avenue  
Libertyville, IL 60048  
(847) 362-3009

# Tribute Wall



“ *Burnett-Dane Funeral Home created a Live Funeral Footage in memory of William "Bill" Schnell*



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**Burnett-Dane Funeral Home** - November 02, 2022 at 06:58 PM

RH

“ *Bill and I worked together for 20+ years. He was always willing to listen, add his input, and help wherever he could. A true friend and mentor. I actually had a model I wanted him to review and only found out of his passing due to his phone being disconnected. My sincere condolences to the Schnell family. He will be missed. Robert Hamilton*

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**Robert Hamilton** - August 10, 2023 at 11:24 AM

TD

“ *Very sad to learn of Bill's passing. I was blessed to have worked with Bill for many years at Baxter; he was a role model of creativity and innovation. His ideas had a huge impact on healthcare. My favorite memories of Bill were kicking around crazy ideas in his machine shop and watching him work his magic. He was happiest getting his hands dirty!*  
*Tom Dudar*

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**Tom Dudar** - November 13, 2022 at 03:44 PM

DH

“ Few people ever had the impact on so many people as Bill did. Bill and his partner in crime, John Munsch, showed the dreamers in us all that anything was possible. You'd just make it out of unobtainium and it would cost a lot of money. Bill's impact on others and his personal achievements have made this world a much, much better place. Dave Hopper

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**David Hopper** - November 11, 2022 at 02:03 PM

KB

“ I am so sorry for your lose. Bill was an amazing man. I have had the pleasure of working with him for over 20 years and I can't say enough good things about him. His knowledge was endless, His talent was astounding. I have always admired his ability to remember everything and provide insight (good and bad) on no matter what the subject was. He will be truly missed.

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**Ken Buckler** - November 09, 2022 at 09:33 AM

JJ

“ I am honored to call Bill a friend. We worked together for many years at Baxter and kept in touch thereafter. He will be missed. I wonder what he's designing right now. RIP buddy - John Japuntich

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**John Japuntich** - November 07, 2022 at 07:42 AM

LW

“ Years ago Bill and I worked together at IIT and we were friends. Bill then went to work for Baxter. He encouraged me to join him at Baxter and I did. I am forever grateful to Bill for that.  
Lu Wolf

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**Lu Wolf** - November 06, 2022 at 05:25 PM

RG

“ *Sad to hear that Bill passed away. I always enjoyed working with him on a variety of projects.*

*Rich Goldhaber*

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**Richard Paul Goldhaber** - November 05, 2022 at 07:06 PM