



William "Bill" Justus

May 28, 1947 - October 16, 2023

Bill Justus, May 28, 1947-October 16, 2023.

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Bill Justus, a beloved figure in the world of Tennessee sports, who left us on October 16, 2023. Bill's exceptional journey began in Knoxville and left an indelible mark on the University of Tennessee's basketball history.

Born in 1947, Bill Justus was a proud graduate of Fulton High School, where he displayed remarkable athleticism. He achieved the title of All-State in football in 1964 and was also named All-State in basketball for consecutive years, 1964 and 1965. His talents did not go unnoticed, as he earned Honorable Mention All-American honors in football in 1964, and he reached the pinnacle by becoming an All-American in basketball in 1965.

In 1965, Bill Justus embarked on a journey at the University of Tennessee, initially as part of the freshman football team. However, destiny had other plans for him, and he transitioned into the world of college basketball. In 1967, Bill played a pivotal role in guiding his team to the coveted SEC Championship. He proved to be a three-year stalwart in the team's starting lineup, earning All-SEC honors three years in a row. His achievements extended beyond the court when he was recognized as an NCAA Basketball Academic All-American in 1968.

During his senior year, Bill assumed the role of captain for the Vols, earning the title of NCAA All-American and showcasing his unmatched free-throw shooting prowess, claiming the NCAA free throw shooting championship in

1969 with an accuracy rate exceeding 90%. In addition, Bill was selected to play in the East-West College All-Star Game, and his team received an invitation to the National Invitational Tournament (NIT).

Bill will forever be celebrated for his extraordinary free-throw accuracy, holding not only three NIT free throw records but also three single-game NCAA Madison Square Garden free throw records, a testament to his unwavering skill and precision, which endured for nearly 25 years.

The professional world beckoned, and Bill was drafted by multiple leagues, reflecting his immense talent: the Philadelphia 76ers in the NBA, Denver in the ABA, and even the Dallas Cowboys in the NFL. His legacy as a multi-sport athlete is a source of inspiration.

Post-college, Bill embarked on a journey that took him across the United States, teaching invaluable ball-handling and shooting skills at coaches' clinics and basketball camps. He shared his wealth of knowledge and passion for the sport. In 1990, Bill Justus was rightfully inducted into the Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame, and in 2005 he was inducted into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame further solidifying his place in sports history.

Eventually Bill channeled his athleticism into tennis, where he unsurprisingly excelled, securing numerous USTA amateur tennis championships. His love for the game endured, as he continued to compete actively for decades. The characteristics Bill demonstrated as an athlete helped him transition into a long career in sales and marketing from which he recently retired.

As we bid farewell to Bill Justus, we remember an outstanding athlete, a loyal friend, and a cherished figure in the world of sports. His legacy lives on in the countless lives he touched and the records that still stand as a testament to his enduring athleticism. He will be dearly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends during this time of mourning.

Bill is survived by his nieces, Dr. Carolyn Justus Ryan and Stephanie Justus, and his great-niece, Cadence Leigh Ryan. He is predeceased by his parents Horace and Carolyn Justus and his brother David Justus.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 2:00pm on November 11, 2023 at Phillips Robinson Funeral Home on 2707 Gallatin Pike, Nashville, TN. You are welcome to wear your Vols orange!

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the University of Tennessee Foundation. Checks will be collected at the Celebration of Life on November 11.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

NOV 11. 2:00 PM (CT)

Phillips-Robinson Funeral Home - Nashville Chapel

2707 Gallatin Pike

Nashville, TN 37216

(615) 262-3312

info@phillipsrobinson.com

<https://www.phillipsrobinson.com/>

Tribute Wall



“ *Phillips-Robinson Funeral Home created a Webcast in memory of William "Bill" Justus*



Phillips-Robinson Funeral Home - November 11, 2023 at 01:42 PM

DD

“ *Billy,
Those few Thanksgiving dinners we shared were unforgettable. We still have great laughs over all your fishing stories with Lou, and the missing piece of caramel cake your Mom made each Thanksgiving. You are going to enjoy your your new life-- the fish are biting, the tennis courts are open, plenty of caramel cake and those you loved are back with you. You will be missed.*

Drew Danko - November 11, 2023 at 11:07 AM

CK

“ *1 file added to the album Bill Justus Album*



Christopher Kerr - November 08, 2023 at 12:31 AM

RH

“ I was so very sad when I heard about Billy!!! He and i were Pledge brothers together in 1965. The first memory I have of him was we were at the frat house and shooting basketball. He came up and we said you play some basketball? I guess he said yes and WOW!!! Most of us didn't know he was a highschool all-American. In those days with no social media and I was from west Tn. we just did not have all the information and communications of today. He was a great fraternity brother and friend. One more great memory was I ran with him on our Phi Delta Theta track team in 68 and 69. We set a frat record time for the 400 yard relay. Also it was a great memory to watch him play for UT!!! Also I was a football student manager and when he was on the freshman team as quarterback were great times. God Bless his family!!! Bob Horton Camden Tn

Robert L Horton - October 29, 2023 at 08:52 AM

BR

“ Got to know Bill from working with him at Giant Photos. What a wonderful humble Christian man. I know where you are brother :)

Brad - October 26, 2023 at 11:59 AM



“ As a youngster growing up in the 60s, Bill was one of my heros. Thanks for all the memories Bill. RIP

R.C. Evans - October 22, 2023 at 09:32 AM

SM

“ Billy was a wonderful friend for 70 years. Though separated by many miles, any time we spoke it was like we were in the back yard on Clearview Ave or sitting around the pool at Whittle Springs. He has now joined his mom and dad, his brother David who he really looked up to, his Coaches Fry and Mears as well as several former teammates, classmates and friends. I'm unsure of how heavenly protocol works but oh the stories they can share. I hope to see them all again. I love you Billy

Smitty - October 20, 2023 at 10:21 AM