

## ***William Lee Dalton***

### **William Lee Dalton; 80, Husband, Father, Grandfather, Radio Broadcast Pioneer and Entrepreneur**

William Lee Dalton was born on May 4, 1932 in Lincoln, Nebraska. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in Business from Duke University in 1957 where he was president of the Kappa Sigma fraternity. He served in the U.S. Army at Fort Meyer, Virginia.

His professional career began with Metromedia in Cleveland at WHK, then to WIP in Philadelphia. His career took off and flourished when he launched and managed the new FM station in Washington, DC; WASH-FM in 1968 for Metromedia.

Upon arrival, he immediately set about popularizing the FM band by bringing a wide variety of high quality adult-appeal popular music, friendly and familiar on-air announcers, frequent news and sports updates. He believed that better on-air programming coupled with quality stereo sound, would gain interest and popularity in the station and in FM radio.

In 1969, Bill scored a coup by hiring away popular morning host Eddie Gallaher and launched his debut on WASH-FM with a newspaper advertisement featuring a photo of Mr. Gallaher facing away from the camera with the subtle headline "Eddie's BACK to music." Advertisers loved it and the station moved up steadily in the ratings, successfully competing head on with then ratings leader WMAL-AM.

During Bill's time at WASH-FM, the station was acknowledged as a pioneer of the "Adult Contemporary" radio format, now one of the most widely used formats in American broadcasting. The station won local, national, and international recognition for its news and programming including the Billboard Magazine award as Station of the Year.

His incredible success in Washington earned him General Manager assignments with Metromedia's KLAC in Los Angeles and WNEW in New York. He headed broadcast operations for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The Daltons entered into radio ownership in 1981. They formed The Dalton Group, purchased their first station in the Washington DC area; WXTR/ XTRA 104. The Dalton Group positioned WXTR from a suburban station to one that served the Washington metro area; formatted in oldies, enjoyed by listeners and trusted by advertisers.

Bill and Susan expanded their ownership by purchasing radio stations WGRR in Cincinnati, Ohio and radio stations WWMG and WEND in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The Daltons businesses were very successful. Bill Dalton's work and leadership in

the broadcast business was the training ground for many future broadcast managers, executives and entrepreneurs. His greatest legacy is the amazing ability to create a cohesive, cooperative and collegial atmosphere where people could excel and grow. This was the case in the broadcast business and in the work he did for the communities he loved.

After retiring, the Daltons moved to Naples, Florida, where he and his wife Susan quickly became as involved in that community as they had been in Washington. He was founder and chairman of the board of *The Garden of Hope & Courage at Naples Community Hospital* where Bill and Susan created the "The Children's Garden". He served on the boards of Habitat for Humanity of Collier County; The Boys & Girls Club of Collier County and The Friendship Health Clinic. Their gifts also included the amphitheater at the Children's Museum of Naples "C-MON". He and Susan made a leadership gift to create the *Dalton Discovery Center at The Conservancy of Southwest Florida* in Naples that opened in November 2012, with great fanfare. Bill and Susan have been generous givers to a wide variety of other charitable institutions supporting causes they are passionate about.

Susan and Bill also have a second home in Linville Ridge, in the mountains of North Carolina. They've had the mountain house for 17 years and spent summers in the cool mountain air playing golf and having fun with friends and family. True to form, Susan and Bill were also involved with a number of charitable institutions in North Carolina as well.

Bill is survived by his wife of 33 years, Susan Louise Dalton. His three adult children include: Diane Warren of San Antonio, Texas; Robert of Atlanta, Georgia; and John of Knoxville, Tennessee. Daughter-in-law Terri Ann Dalton and son-in-law Randall Fulton Warren. The grandchildren include Nicholas William Verzijl, Christina Lee Verzijl, Brian William Dalton, Alexandra Paige Dalton, Mark Louis Dalton, Christopher William Dalton and Krystin Victoria Dalton.

The Memorial Service will be Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup> in Naples at North Naples United Methodist Church at 11am, 6000 Goodlette Road North, Naples, FL 34109 (239-593-7600). There will be a reception after the service at Grey Oaks Country Club.

Susan Dalton and the family so grateful for your prayers and support. We know those who knew him loved him with us.

In lieu of flowers, we'd prefer honoring his commitment to Naples with donations to either: ***The Garden of Hope and Courage at Naples Community Hospital***, 1177 Third Street South, Naples, FL 34102 <http://www.gardenofhopeandcourage.org/> or ***The Conservancy of Southwest Florida/The Dalton Discovery Center***, 1450 Merrihue Dr., Naples, FL 34102 <https://www.conservancy.org/>