



William F. "Bill" Gimpel Jr.

November 11, 1941 - March 11, 2026

William Ferdinand Gimpel Jr., 84, of Chestertown, Maryland, died March 11, 2026.

William "Bill" Gimpel was born in Boston, MA on November 11, 1941, the eldest child of William F. Gimpel Sr. and Edith (Witherell) Gimpel. He grew up in Raynham, MA, and spent his summers in Roland Park, NH at the family cottage where he explored the woods, picked blueberries, and hand-cranked ice cream. It was his summers spent up-country that instilled in him a life-long love of nature, and it was on Dan Hole Pond where he learned to swim, canoe, and fish. Bill was an avid outdoorsman who especially enjoyed fishing in Dan Hole Pond and Pyramid Lake in Nevada. He formed strong bonds with the folks he fished with and those in his hunt club. He loved observing nature, whether from his back door or deep in the wilderness. He enjoyed walks in the woods and was happy to share his knowledge about all kinds of organisms with anyone who was curious.

Bill graduated from Taunton High School in 1959 and spent that summer working on Star Island, NH as an engineer where he met his future wife, E. Christine Church. He earned an associate's degree from the Thompson School of Agriculture at the University of New Hampshire, where he majored in horticulture to avoid a required class on poultry science. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1962 and spent most of his service as a shipfitter on the USS

Taconic. He nearly missed his own wedding but received special dispensation to leave his ship while it was deployed in the naval blockade of the Dominican Republic. Chris and Bill were married on June 12, 1965, and he was honorably discharged as a Petty Officer 2nd Class in 1966.

After leaving the service he earned a B.S. in agricultural economics, followed by an M.S. and a PhD. in entomology from the University of Maryland. He and Chris moved to Bowie, MD where they raised their two children, Maren and Rob. They lived there for more than 50 years until 2024 when they moved to Heron Point in Chestertown, MD.

Bill worked for the Maryland Department of Agriculture for 31 years, starting as a nursery inspector and retiring as Chief of Plant Protection. He managed regulatory issues involving insect pests and plant diseases. He was an active member of many scientific and trade groups, including the Entomological Society of America, the National Plant Board, and the Maryland Nursery, Landscape and Greenhouse Association, where he helped create the Certified Professional Horticulturist program and was the first regulator to ever serve on their board of directors.

In his personal time, he was a gardener with his own greenhouse, where he hybridized roses and propagated plants. He grew flowers, fruits, and vegetables, and over the years, he transformed an open suburban lot into a garden oasis. He was also a beekeeper who gave away the honey he produced to his friends and colleagues.

Bill enjoyed lending a hand to his neighbors and the communities that mattered to him. He loved to help his friends with their renovations, repairs, and weekend cabins. A lifelong Unitarian Universalist he served on committees in churches in Annapolis, MD, White Stone, VA and Chestertown, MD, and held leadership roles within the Star Island Corporation, where he

and Chris met, and returned almost every summer for conferences with their family.

When he was nearing retirement, Bill and Chris purchased a century-old waterfront house in Weems, VA. Where others would have seen a tear-down, he put his skills to use gutting and renovating to create a comfortable home where they were able to spend a significant portion of the last 20 years. He loved the beautiful view of the creek and the pier where he raised oysters and launched his canoe.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Christine; daughter and son-in-law Maren and Dan of Chestertown; son Rob of Bowie; grandchildren Trinity and Quinn McCauley; and 12 nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his parents and his siblings, Tim Gimpel and Betsy Gimpel Mena.

Memorial donations can be made in Bill's name to Star Island (<https://starisland.org/donate-online/>), the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (https://community.forestsociety.org/site/Donation2?df_id=1680&mfc_pref=T&1680.donation=form1), or the Foreman's Branch Bird Observatory (https://www.washcoll.edu/giving/giving-form.php?form_designation_interest2=CES)

Tribute Wall

MG

“ There was a period of time when Bill and my dad, Bud Gridley, shared their interest in fishing in Dan Hole Pond up in Roland Park. Lake trout and landlocked salmon. I have some pictures somewhere of them showing off their catches. My dad had a story about an occasion when they spotted a deer swimming across the lake. They were able to bring the canoe up behind the animal and actually touch its antlers. It was a wonderful memory for my dad.

Mark Gridley - April 21 at 11:12 PM

RT

“ Bill hired me in 1987 as a fresh out of grad school entomologist. Taking the job he recruited me for as a regulatory entomologist at the Maryland Department of Agriculture was one of the best decisions I made, even though I didn't fully realize it at the time. Bill and I butted heads on occasion, but we developed a mutual respect over the years. He was a good leader and boss, and led us on many adventurous projects. Bill had a way of challenging me that reminded me a lot of my father, another hugely important person in my life. I hold many fond memories of working with Bill, and sharing stories and perspectives. He will be greatly missed.

Robert Trumbule - April 12 at 03:41 PM

BS

“ Bill was my supervisor during most of my career at the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Bill was an excellent entomologist and horticulturist, a fellow beekeeper, a kind person, a friend, and was highly respected by the nursery industry that he served. He cared about his work and I have many fond memories of normal work with him and helping him with some crazy projects like setting up decorations/plant material for Governor Schaefer, building a concrete slab, creating the State garden at the fairgrounds, working the entire night updating and printing the final copy of his dissertation, and trying to stomp out varroa mites. May he rest in peace.

Bart Smith - March 26 at 05:28 PM

JN

“ Lots of good memories of good times spent with Bill and Chris. Several classes together with Bill in grad school, Faculty league bowling, and numerous yard projects at each others house, usually involving swapping a few plants or sometimes fish or aquatic plants for indoor aquariums. Although we drifted apart after UMD, we always both knew that the other was just a phone call away (an eventually a PM or email) and those sporadic contacts did occur regarding a variety of subjects, me asking him about plant pests and he inquiring about termites and other urban pests. And as fate would have it, we did get together twice last summer for lunch with a couple of other UMD friends from yesteryear. We planned to continue those lunch meetings again this summer. Rest in peace my friend, you will be missed and remembered fondly.

Jay Nixon - March 25 at 05:16 PM



“ So many wonderful memories. His MS and PhD, Dan Hole Pond, Manhattans, Bugs Inn, Pyramid Lake and the Stone Mother, scientific publications, Star Island, incomparable friendship, joy of sharing each other’s lives, a diverse community of friends and family, and so much more!! He is greatly missed.

Douglass Miller - March 22 at 08:30 AM

BW

“ Bill Gimple lived an exemplary life. He was a recognized naturalist, a conservationist, and a quietly but deeply spiritual person. The Universe will miss him and needs more like him.

Bob Weekley - March 21 at 09:52 PM

MS

“ Bill was a great supervisor,an interesting person and a wonderful colleague. I enjoyed many lunches with him and a couple of safaris as we looked at Southern Maryland. Always curious. As Mike Cantwell said" I guess you're stuck with his truck now". I bought it from him in2006
May he rest on peace

Mark Smith - March 21 at 09:25 AM

SJ

“ Prayers and comfort to Bill's Family.



Suzanne Jackson - March 21 at 09:16 AM

DB

“ Bill hired me in the early 80’s as a counterpoint to the regulatory functions at MDA. He was always supportive and encouraged ones career growth. He could be tough and stubborn but it all worked out in the end. Had fun taking him fishing on my catamaran under sail. He never said 8-10 knots wasn’t a trolling speed. The 35” rock that we dragged behind swallowed so much water it looked like a barrel when we got back to the dock. I also remember sitting in his office on 9/11 contemplating the state of the universe. Cheers!
Dick Bean

Dick Bean - March 20 at 05:59 PM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home - March 20 at 12:59 PM