



William Michael Bailey

May 20, 2006

William Michael Bailey, a long time professor of economics and one of the longest-surviving heart transplant recipients, died of cancer on May 20, 2006. He was 68.

Dr. Bailey had just retired after 31 years as a Professor of Economics at Washington College. As chair of the Department of Economics for twelve years (1975-1987), he helped to shape one of the College's most popular majors. In recognition of this achievement, he was named the inaugural Hodson Trust Professor of Economics in 1977.

After a successful heart transplant in 1988, Dr. Bailey became a community advocate for organ donation and often spoke with students in the philosophy department's medical ethics class about his personal experience of benefiting from someone else's loss and the ethical responsibility that came with that gift. He often said that he wanted to live his life in a way that would be "some small recompense" for the life of the 25-year-old heart donor whose life was lost.

On campus, he was highly regarded among his peers for his keen intelligence, his passion for economic history and his philosophical grounding in economics. On his retirement, students lauded him for his ability to explain difficult concepts; one former student called Dr. Bailey "a man of stories and words." His teachings sparked ideas and understandings not only in the field

of economics, but on life lessons as well. Former students paid tribute to his virtuosity as a teacher by naming a classroom for him. In the wider Chestertown community, he had distinguished himself as chairman of the Kent County Historical Trust. A proud liberal Democrat, he served for eight years on the Chestertown Town Council, which his wife, Margo, now leads as Mayor.

Beneath his brilliant intellectual capacity and his professional accomplishments, Michael was a family man.

“Michael’s greatest passion, the thing he most liked to talk about, was his family, his wife and his eight children, whom he adored,” said Robert Lynch, chair of the department of economics. “When I think back over the many conversations I had with Michael what stands out are his brilliance, his thoughtfulness, his kindness, his sensitivity, his wise council, his deep affection for his family, and his love of humanity. His passing is a great loss.”

He earned a bachelor’s degree in economics from North Texas State University and a Ph.D. in economics from University of Maryland College Park. Before coming to Washington College, Michael served as a professor of economics at both the University of Maryland and at American University.

Dr. Bailey had served as chair of Washington College’s Finance Committee and as a faculty advisor to the Young Democrats Club and the Investment Club. He had also served on the Governor’s Council on Libraries.

Dr. Bailey is survived by his father, William Leonard Bailey of Houston, Texas; a brother, Richard Bailey, also of Houston; his wife of 24 years, Margo Bailey of Chestertown; eight children: sons Joel, Eric, Keith, Colin and Owen; and daughters Nancy, Carrie and Maren and ten grandchildren. His youngest son, Owen, who was five when his father received his new heart, is a senior at Washington College.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in his name to the Kent

County Public Library, 408 High Street, Chestertown, Maryland 21620. A private memorial service will be held on Tuesday, May 23rd.

Tribute Wall



“ *William Michael Bailey*

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ *William Michael Bailey*

January 28, 2023 at 12:44 PM



“ *William Michael Bailey*

January 28, 2023 at 08:03 AM