



## William "Bill" Allen Lathrop

April 5, 1934 - May 22, 2020

William ("Bill") Allen Lathrop, whose career as a Chico Unified school principal spanned three decades, died May 22 at Windchime Assisted Living after a short battle with cancer. He was 86. Bill was a funny, kind and loving man who was deeply devoted to his wife Jan with whom he celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on April 10 of this year. They met at Chico State, fell in love, raised four children and devoted their lives to education -- he as a principal and she as a teacher.

Bill graduated in 1952 from Orland High School, where he was crowned Homecoming King and was a standout football player. He married Jan Newhart on April 10, 1955, at St. John's Catholic Church.

Bill worked 15-hour days as the manager of Miller's Market in Chico while earning degrees from Chico State in history and political science, which he received in 1956. He then completed his master's degree and administrative credential there in 1960, attending night school while teaching sixth grade at Chapman Elementary. He served as principal there for 13 years.

From 1975 until his retirement in 1990, he was principal at Parkview Elementary. Students, parents, teachers and fellow administrators admired and respected his calm nature, skilled leadership, great sense of humor and deep respect for the dignity of children.

Bill had a special love for the spirited child who got "sent to the principal's office," because he once was that kid. For example, as a student at Orland High, he and a buddy placed a dead skunk in the boiler room, causing a shut down of the school for days while the stench cleared. This was one of his many escapades and it was only fitting that he would one day become a school principal.

As a parent and a principal, he approached discipline with an eye toward helping the child learn from every situation. In a 1990 news story about his retirement, he said, "Never treat

them with sarcasm. Be positive and give them a sense of direction. Show children an appropriate way of handling a situation, rather than dwelling on their mistakes.”

After his retirement from Chico Unified, he supervised student teachers and served as interim principal/superintendent at several school districts in Northern California. He and Jan, who retired from teaching at Notre Dame School, enjoyed this time of their lives, visiting their grandchildren and traveling in their fifth-wheel trailer throughout the Western U.S. and Mexico.

Bill loved the outdoors and was an avid hunter and fisherman all of his life, a passion that he passed on to his sons and grandsons. He and several friends built the Lathrop family cabin at Buck's Lake where they all spent many memorable summers fishing, waterskiing, barbecuing and relaxing. He and his family also enjoyed numerous trips to Big Lagoon State Park in Humboldt County that included agate hunting on the beach and salmon fishing on the Pacific.

Bill shared many rich, lifelong friendships with his high school and college buddies. He and Jan lived 63 years in the same home on Thomas Lane in their beloved community of Chico. In 2019, they moved in to Windchime Assisted Living where they made new friends and received loving care from the Windchime staff.

The youngest of 11 children, Bill was born April 5, 1934, in Geddes, South Dakota. He lived part of his childhood in Maysville, Iowa, before the family moved to California and settled in Orland in the 1940s. Born during the Depression, his large family had very little, but they were blessed with an abiding love and their Catholic faith. His humble start gave him an appreciation for simple pleasures like sharing a delicious meal with family, hunting for a yard sale bargain and enjoying the beauty of nature. He was also an excellent father who exemplified patience and showed gentle, loving kindness toward his children all of their lives.

His parents Henry and Catherine, and siblings Maurice, Jack, Ellen, Raymond, Edward and Paul died previously. Three of his siblings died in childhood. A 4 year-old son, Michael, and a daughter-in-law, Heike, also predeceased him. He is survived by his wife Jan; his sister Carol Martin of Sacramento; two sons, Mark (Vieva) Lathrop of Red Bluff and Matt (Zenita) Lathrop of Redmond, Oregon; and two daughters, Mindy (Chip) Raffi of Sandown, New Hampshire, and Mia (Scott) Winter of Chico.

Bill had twelve grandchildren: Erika (Fred) Montgomery, Lauren (Ryan) Lathrop and Lucas (Shanta) Lathrop; Michael and Kylie Raffi; Nolan (Emi), Olivia and Megan Lathrop;

Sterling and Sophia Winter; Justin (Lyssa) Moss and Danielle (Jonathon) Dollarhide. He also had twelve great-grandchildren: Kira and Marcus Montgomery; Audrey Vu and Layne Swett; Madelyn, Kate and Ella Lathrop; Levi, Griffin, Pepper and Raylan Lathrop; and Patrick Moss.

The family plans to gather for a celebration of his life when possible.

# Cemetery

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## **Glen Oaks Memorial Park**

11115 Midway

Chico, CA,

# Comments

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“ Among the Best of Men

The best principal in my 30+ years has passed away. On my list of favorite educators, Bill Lathrop is at the very top. Of the many skills that made him so adapted to his work Was his ability to sense a good addition to his staff and hire him/her. He put together an exceptional team, carefully stepped back, And let them do their work, while always being there for support. If you needed information from him, he'd deftly find the answer In one of the piles in his "one-of-kind desktop filing system." I never heard him talk down to anyone, child or adult. He was an honest talker, with a humorous twinkle in his eye. And his sage advice was willingly accepted by all. He was a Teacher's Principal, and a Child's Principal, And everyone loved him and could count on him. Surely he's been granted a prime spot in Sportsmen's Heaven

Gary Matthews

Gary Matthews - June 07, 2020 at 10:34 AM

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“ My deepest sympathy I was a student at Chapman school he was a great principal.

Carrie lee - June 05, 2020 at 04:53 PM

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“ Bill was a true gentle man and treated children, faculty and staff with understanding and compassion. He also knew how to make others smile with his use of subtle humor. Bill was a positive influence on innumerable people and his sage guidance which was sought and valued by many. Surely his legacy lives on through the many students he taught and the faculty and staff he led as a principal. My condolences to all of his family members and friends.

David Scott - Parkview Elementary School staff member 1987-1990

David Scott - June 01, 2020 at 02:40 PM

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“ I remember going to Big Lagoon and having a blast, or playing in the sprinkler at your place In Chico when I was a kid. So many unforgettable memories together, I already miss you tons! Will always love you and will never forget some of your jokes, and times we had together.

Love you so much Grandpa, I miss you tons already .

Michael Raffi - May 31, 2020 at 06:37 PM

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“ Hey Dad, I miss you like crazy. You could always “tell by our outfits that were were both cowboys.” Thanks for welcoming me into to your family and blessing me with such a wonderful bride, Melinda Diane. She’s been a treasure and I promise to serve her in the same way you have served Jan for 65+ years. Rest In Peace.

Chip Raffi - Bills son-in-law - May 31, 2020 at 05:03 PM

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“ Was so sorry to hear about Mr. Lathrop passing away. He was my teacher at Chapman School and all of us kids loved him. My daughter's had him as their principle at Parkview School. My condolences to his wife and family at this sad time. God Bless.  
Noreen Enns (Gerfen)

Noreen Enns - May 30, 2020 at 07:24 PM

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“ I was a student at Chapman when Mr. Lathrop was principal. I remember that he knew the name of every student, long before anyone was focusing on building community and making sure each child was seen. I was only sent to see him once. I was so naive that I didn’t know anything about giving someone the finger. One of my peers asked, “Can you hold up just your middle finger by itself?” I didn’t know if I could, but I tried, and promptly got sent to see Mr. Lathrop. He asked me if I knew what the gesture meant. I told him I didn’t. He told me that nice girls didn’t make that gesture. I’m sure he must have both shaken his head and chuckled after I walked out of his office. I never went to the principal’s office again. Mr. Lathrop was kind and fair. A student can ask no more of a principal. My condolences to the family.

Kathy Sue Justus - May 30, 2020 at 12:37 PM

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“ Prayers for Bills family. Bill was an amazing man and principal. I was blessed to have had him my fist years teaching at Chapman as my principal. He was respected by teachers and parents..He was the best example for all of us..Prayers for his family. He will be missed..  
Pam and Gary Willis

**Pam Willis** - May 29, 2020 at 10:59 AM

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“ Sorry to hear of Bill's passing. As a fellow teacher, I knew and respected him from that venue. He was a great person who will be missed. God bless.

**Barbara Rupp** - May 29, 2020 at 10:45 AM

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“ Our prayers are with your family after the lost of your husband and father. Our family have many fond memories of Bill, Mr. Lathrop, from his years at Parkview Elementary.. All 3 of our children attended Parkview.. I will always remember his calm phone call one morning advising that I should take daughter Kami to the dentist. While waving to friends on her bike to school and not paying attention, she ran into a parked car and chipped off half of a front tooth. I'm sure he had many stories relating to kids . We also were lucky to have rented the beautiful,Lathrop Cabin at Buck's Lake one year. We were fortunate to have known him.  
The Don Tarman Family

**Don Tarman FAmily** - May 29, 2020 at 02:34 AM