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## William Henley Bird

*30 March 1929 – 19 August 2010*

William Henley Bird, a Christchurch General Practitioner, died at Windermere Hospital on 19 August 2010, aged 81.



Bill was born into a medical-oriented family. His father, William Anderson Bird, was a long-serving General Practitioner in Greymouth and his maternal uncle, Wilton Henley, an Auckland Physician and Medical Superintendent-in Chief of the Auckland Hospital Board. Bill was the eldest of four boys, three who did medicine. John predeceased him in 2009, Barrie practiced in Timaru, now retired to Christchurch, and Chris the youngest was an international airline pilot who now lives in Queensland.

Bill attended Grey Main Primary School before entering St Andrew's College as a boarder in 1943. He became Head of the house and Deputy Head of the College in 1948. He was an enthusiastic member of the College Pipe Band (as drum sergeant) an interest which persisted all his life. He was captain of the second XV and played for the school tennis eight.

He attended Canterbury University College before moving to Otago University where he graduated from Medical School in 1955. Two years as a house-surgeon at Christchurch Hospital followed before he bought Dr Doug Logan's practice in Greymouth where he built up a large obstetrical practice as well as becoming a part-time physician on the staff of Grey Hospital.

In 1970 Bill and his family moved to Christchurch where he joined Dr Geoffrey Clarke in practice at Bishopdale. He sold the practice to Dr Erin Moran in 1992 and did locum work until his retirement in 1996.

He became a member of the College of General Practitioners in 1960 and a member of the RNZCGP in 1974. He was elected a Fellow of the College in 1987. During his years in General Practice he was appointed a Medical Officer for Medbury Preparatory School from 1979 and St Andrews College from 1986 holding these positions for 9 and 6 years respectively. During the 1980s he was a tutor in General Practice at the Christchurch School of Medicine.

In the early 1980s Bill developed an interest in acupuncture and attended a comprehensive course with Dr Ian Schneideman at Forest Glen, Queensland. He successfully incorporated this into his practice.

Bill met Ruth Hampton at Christchurch Hospital and they were married in 1959. They had four children Bill, Amanda, Nicholas and Andrew of whom he was enormously proud.

His interests were wide and varied and he never lost his love of the outdoors. Early family holidays were spent at Waikawa Bay and later at Golden Bay sailing and fishing. He built a Sunburst and as the family left home he spent many hours at Tata Beach in a Laser. His love of fly fishing learnt on the West Coast never left him and he eagerly awaited the opening of the High Country fishing season each November. Over the last 20 years visits to Wanaka gave him much pleasure.

On retirement he played golf with a group of friends and retained interest in the local Probus Club, his Masonic Lodge, U3A and the garden.

The diagnosis of Parkinson's disease in 2006 deprived Bill of many of his activities and over the next few years he became increasingly disabled, necessitating his going into care at Windermere Hospital where he had been a Medical Officer during his General Practice days.

His funeral service conducted at the St Andrew's College chapel was crowded and constituted an impressive farewell to a much loved doctor and friend. Bill, Andrew and son-in-law Philip Morreau, a Paediatric Surgeon, described his life and contributions to the community. At the conclusion of the service the immediate family were conducted from the chapel, led by a solitary piper, as Bill would have wanted it.

Bill is survived by Ruth, 4 children, 11 grandchildren, and brothers Barrie and Chris.

He was a gentle man; a good doctor, husband, father, and friend who is greatly missed by many.

Dr Shailer Weston wrote this obituary.