



## William J. Ross Ph.D.

December 4, 1938 - April 18, 2019

ADRIAN – William J. Ross, Ph.D., age 80 of Adrian, passed away Thursday, April 18, 2019, at The Oasis at Adrian Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center. He was born December 4, 1938, in DeTour, Michigan, the oldest of the seven children of Charles and Blanche (Polaczyk) Ross.

He earned a Bachelor's Degree from Michigan State University, a Master's Degree from Western Michigan University as a Mott Intern, his Education Specialist Degree from Eastern Michigan University and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan.

On June 20, 1964, he married Barbara Dull, at the Methodist Church in Nashville, Michigan, and she survives.

After working as principal for Sand Creek Schools, Bill was approached by Milton C. Porter to work on establishing what is now the Lenawee Intermediate School District. Bill worked tirelessly in this endeavor and was instrumental in passing the first of many millages. From 1966 to 1971, he was the Director of Vocational Education for Lenawee and Adrian Public Schools. He then went to Byron Area Schools as their superintendent from 1971 to 1978. He returned to Adrian to serve as the superintendent at Lenawee Intermediate School District from 1978 to 1998.

Bill held many leadership positions including serving as President of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School District Administrators, President of the Region VIII MASA as well as on the State Association Governing Council, and as a member of the State Board of Education Michigan

Accreditation Program Advisory Committee. Locally, he was a long-time member of the Adrian Rotary Club and more recently a member of Civitan. Bill also served on the boards of the YMCA, the Salvation Army and Goodwill. Bill and Barbara were snow birds for many years in Venice, Florida, and had wonderful memories from their various travel adventures together.

In addition to Barbara, his wife of almost 55 years, he is survived by their daughter, Elisabeth; siblings, Eugene (Polly) Ross, Nancy (Bill) Curley, Dorrie Ferguson, Margaret (Lynn) Adams, Lyle (Cindy) Ross and Roy Ross (Pat Wing); sister-in-law Betty (Forest) Rogers; and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; a daughter, Brenda; and his mother and father-in-law, John and Montiel Dull.

Funeral services will take place at 1 p.m., Wednesday, April 24, 2019 at Wagley Funeral Home with Rev. Christopher Brundage. Visitation will be held at the funeral home on Tuesday from 4 to 8 p.m.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

APR **23**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Wagley Funeral Home (Adrian)  
1501 W. Maumee St.  
Adrian, MI 49221  
(517) 263-1400  
info@wagleyfuneralhome.com  
<https://www.WagleyFuneralHome.com>

## Funeral Service

APR **24**. 1:00 PM (ET)

Wagley Funeral Home (Adrian)  
1501 W. Maumee St.  
Adrian, MI 49221  
(517) 263-1400  
info@wagleyfuneralhome.com  
<https://www.WagleyFuneralHome.com>

# Tribute Wall



“ *William J. Ross Ph.D.*

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January 28, 2023 at 12:24 PM



“ *My sympathies go out to Barbara and the rest of the Ross family. I worked with Bill at the LISD, in the early years of developing Stubnitz Environmental Education Center programs. He was the driving force behind that building and its programs, and has been a constant source of encouragement and positivity. He was an effective leader and a caring member of the community and he will be missed.*

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**Pam Bunch** - April 23, 2019 at 10:12 PM



“ *Barb,*

*I will always have fond, warm memories working with Bill, Jim Brown, & Bruce Stephen.*

*I recall being invited to your home for dinner with Bill, you, & Morris Breakstone the first year we were at Vo-Tec.*

*Great Memories,*

*Blessings and Prayers,*

*Ray Hamblin*

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**Ray Hamblin** - April 23, 2019 at 03:44 PM

CK

“ *Bill's decision to start the teacher and student exchanges with Moriyama, Shiga, Japan 30 years ago impacted both our lives in ways we could never have imagined. Bill was also a good friend. We will miss him. Our thoughts are with Barbara, Betsy and their entire family.*  
*Masahiro and Cindy Kojima*

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**Cynthia Kojima** - April 23, 2019 at 02:54 PM

SK

“ *To the Ross Family. I am so very sorry to hear of your loss. Bill was always so kind. Aunt Blanche was very proud of him and his accomplishments. You are in my thoughts. Sandy Klusack (Dumback)*

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**Sandy Klusack** - April 23, 2019 at 06:07 AM

SC

“ *Bill Ross was a force to be reckoned with! His powerful intellect and compassionate spirit was evident everyday. I had the great pleasure to work with him while I was employed at the ISD from 1977-2004. As a boss, he demanded excellence and ethics both in relations with fellow employees and with those from our twelve constituent school districts and in the decisions affecting students and parents. What I especially appreciated was his compassion for people with special needs. He made me appreciate the way I think and contribute to a team. While a consummate professional, Bill always asked about our family and genuinely listened. Steven Camron*

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**Steven Camron** - April 21, 2019 at 03:22 PM

KE

“ I do not have a history with Mr. Ross nor story after story to share. What I do have is a random encounter at Starbucks. He and his sweet wife began to chat with me and my children while we enjoyed our Starbucks. The 15 minute conversation I had with him impacted my day as well encouraged me in life. It was only a 15 minute conversation but you could tell that Mr. Ross lived life differently - that he was special. During our conversation his passion for his former career and his family and life was evident. His passion for people was the thread throughout our interaction. A 15 minute conversation is all you needed to recognize the uniqueness that engulfed him. He made us feel important. I am assuming that he lived a life doing that to so many others - a legacy. My condolences. He made my life brighter and I only knew him for 15 minutes. I am so sorry for your loss.

Keshia - April 20, 2019 at 09:45 PM

RG

“ Randy, Jan, Kristen and Michael Van Gasse purchased the Florist Choice Bouquet for the family of William J. Ross Ph.D..



Randy, Jan, Kristen and Michael Van Gasse - April 20, 2019 at 12:45 PM

RG

“ Bill was such an inspiration and a very important part of our family when we lived in Adrian. I had the pleasure to work for him. His impact on education in Lenawee County was tremendous and he inspired us to do good things. Barb was our daughter Kristen's aide in elementary school and Bill and Barb have a special place in Kristen's and our hearts. .

Randy and Jan Van Gasse - April 20, 2019 at 12:37 PM

TA

“ *The Lenawee Intermediate Education Association purchased the Simply Elegant Spathi phyllum for the family of William J. Ross Ph.D..*



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**The Lenawee Intermediate Education Association** - April 19, 2019 at 03:31 PM

LH

“ *Lenawee Community Mental Health purchased the Heartfelt Memories for the family of William J. Ross Ph.D..*



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**Lenawee Community Mental Health** - April 19, 2019 at 10:37 AM

JB

“ *Bill hired Debbie at LISD as his assistant. She loved working for him. She will be heartbroken to hear this. He was a wonderful man.*

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**Joe and Debbie Budwit** - April 19, 2019 at 10:15 AM

KR

“ *Condolences to Barb and family. Bill was such a good, kind man - he will be sadly missed.*

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**Karen Rawlings** - April 19, 2019 at 08:02 AM

JD

*Sending loving thoughts and prayers your way. So sorry to hear of Bills passing*

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**June and Larry Decker** - April 19, 2019 at 09:50 AM