Reprinted from www.forevermissed.com

William Benjamin Arce Jr. (“Bill”) relished life, cherished his family, and lived his life with a passion for improving other people's lives.

Bill was born to William Benjamin Arce Sr. and Edith Caroline Friberg Arce on June 24, 1925 in Oakland California. Bill grew up during the Depression and was part of the ‘Greatest Generation’. His strong work ethic began at an early age when he swept classrooms while at elementary school to supplement his family’s income.  Bill’s father instilled in him a true love for the game of baseball, which sparked one of Bill’s greatest life passions – baseball in particular and sport in general.  Bill treated sport as a metaphor for life, and used it to teach and develop generations of young people. He coached competitively at the collegiate level and coached internationally as an ambassador of baseball and goodwill throughout the world.

At 18 years of age, Bill joined the US Army to serve during World War II. He fought with Patton’s infantry in Europe in the Battle of the Bulge where he was injured during combat, and earned the Purple Heart.  After the war, Bill attended Stanford University where he earned a PhD in Education.   He played on Stanford University’s baseball team and was elected the team’s captain.  While successful on the field, Bill’s biggest success story at Stanford was meeting, courting and eventually marrying a beautiful and bright young co-ed, Nancy Truitt.  Bill and Nancy celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on March 25, 2015.

Bill and Nancy eventually found their way to Claremont, California in 1956 where Bill served on the Pomona College athletic department staff, and as the Pomona College baseball coach.  When Claremont Men’s College (now Claremont McKenna College) and Harvey Mudd College established their own athletic department in 1958, Bill was asked to serve as the first athletic Director.  Bill wore several hats during the fledgling years of the program including head baseball coach, assistant football coach, and physical education teacher.  He built the foundation for a sustained ‘develop the whole person’ program that successfully balanced the focus of academics and athletics with the emphasis always on academics and development. Bill continued as the Claremont Men’s College/Harvey Mudd College and eventually Scripps College (CMS) baseball coach and athletic director for many years.  He retired as baseball coach in 1980 and a few years later he retired as athletic director.  Under Bill’s initial leadership, CMS became and continues to be one of the top collegiate NCAA Division III athletic programs.  The baseball field at CMS is now called  "Arce Field"; there is an 'Arce Scholarship Fund', and in 2013, CMS endowed the athletic director position as the ‘Director of Athletics William B Arce Professor and George Roberts Fellow’.

In the early years of Bill’s career at CMC, he was invited to go live in the Netherlands to develop and improve the Dutch national baseball program.  So, in 1962, Bill took his entire family – now consisting of Nancy and their three children Jim, Judy and Jeff – to Europe on an extended sabbatical to live and work in the Netherlands for a year and a half.  During that period, Bill and the family traveled extensively throughout Europe, developing relationships that eventually led to him being invited to multiple countries to help their own baseball programs.

It was this opportunity that ultimately led to Bill becoming an ambassador and educator of baseball at the international level.  He took many of his college teams to Europe over multiple years to play in tournaments and to travel and run clinics.  Bill personally worked and coached in 15 countries in Europe.  He was also the first American to run baseball clinics in Belgium, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Yugoslavia and in 1980, the People’s Republic of China.

Bill coached the Dutch national team to win the 1971 European Baseball Championship, and then in 1975 he went on to coach the Italian national team to win the 1975 European Championship. He was involved in numerous prestigious coaching positions including Team USA (the US international amateur baseball program) in 1970 and 1976.  In 1978, Bill coached for Team USA in the 1978 Amateur World Championships in Italy.  He has also coached with the US All Star team in the Pan American Games in 1971 in Colombia, and with the Alaskan Goldpanners team in 1972 in Fairbanks, Alaska.  Bill has received numerous honors and awards for his work in international baseball. Bill is acknowledged as one of the most well-known and influential people in international baseball.

Among his many honors, in 1976 Bill was voted into the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame. Bill has also been inducted into the Claremont McKenna Hall of Fame, the American Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame and the Dutch and Italian Baseball Halls of Fame.  In 2001, Bill was awarded the prestigious ‘Lefty Gomez Award’, collegiate baseball’s highest honor.  In 1985, Bill founded International Sports Group (‘ISG’) to help continue the mission of improving and spreading coaching and teaching of baseball around the world.  ISG is still operating to this day and continues to serve its mission established by Bill.

Bill is survived by his wife Nancy, his eldest son Jim (wife Pat, daughters Erin and Beth and son Paul), daughter Judy (husband David and sons Michael, Doug, and Owen) and younger son Jeff (wife Loan and daughters Jamie, Caitlyn and Brianna), as well as 4 great grandchildren William, Thomas, Christopher and Oliver.  The family occasionally joined Bill and Nancy’s world travels, and this influence is evidenced by Jim, Judy and Jeff all studying abroad, in Russia, Germany and Denmark, respectively.  We all enjoy traveling and experiencing different cultures to this day.  Bill and Nancy made annual trips to visit and enjoy Jim’s family in the Bay Area, Judy’s family in Melbourne, Australia, and Jeff’s family in Honolulu, Hawaii.  Even as recently as this past July, Bill and Nancy enjoyed participating in their grandson’s wedding in Barcelona, Spain.

Bill loved his family deeply. In addition to teaching them a love for travel, he taught them to camp and fish, and to treat others with deep respect and caring.  Bill loved spending time at the family lake house in Twain Harte, California.  He loved gardening and was proud of the colorful flowers that bloomed in his garden and of the rocks that he collected and used for decoration.  Bill was an avid sports fan and enjoyed watching sports on TV, especially if Stanford was involved, or attending CMS sporting events.  At his home office at their cottage at Mt San Antonio Gardens, he listened to his favorite ‘swing era’ music, made and received calls from all over the world, and responded to and sent out emails (many of them humorous and perhaps a bit ‘colorful’).  Over the years he continued to decorate his office walls and table tops with multiple plaques and trophies memorializing his many awards and honors, and with numerous photos of his teams and his loving family.

Bill’s heart, as big as it was for others, had a faulty valve that was replaced twice over the last few decades, and required a pacemaker to be installed.  Over the last week of his life, his heart started to weaken considerably.  He was admitted to Pomona Valley Hospital on March 5 and passed in comfort and peace, with his close family surrounding his bed side, on the afternoon of March 7.  His passing was timely, as he could no longer enjoy his travels.  And while it was quick, he provided enough time for his family to share stories with him and to say their goodbyes.

We know that Bill is now coaching for a new team… we figure it’s probably the ‘Angels’.

The family is appreciative of the professional and thoughtful care of Bill’s attending nurses and physicians in his final days.  We are thankful for and comforted by the outpouring of love and affection that we have all received in Bill’s passing.