

## **Moscow-Pullman Daily News, Moscow, ID**

**May 18, 2013**

William D. Duncombe, passed away in Oregon on Saturday, May 11, surrounded by his loving family.

He spent his career as a professor at Syracuse University's Maxwell School in the department of Public Administration and International Affairs. His death followed a brief, yet courageous, battle with cancer.

Bill had an international reputation for his research on education finance, property taxes, public budgeting and financial management. He was widely published and the recipient of numerous awards, among them the Aaron Wildavsky Award for lifetime achievement (2009). Bill was passionate about the need for school finance reform and made important scholarly contributions to public debates in California, Kansas, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, New York and Texas.

Bill was born on June 11, 1955, in Columbus, Ohio, to Syd and Mary Duncombe and spent his youth growing up in Moscow along with his three surviving siblings. His love for the outdoors was nurtured in the landscapes of Idaho. Family vacations in the Sawtooth Mountains spawned years of hiking from the Cascades to the Adirondacks. He took almost as much pleasure in making the plans and loved nothing better than perusing a good map or designing a family vacation, be it backpacking or a trip to Spain.

Most dear to Bill's heart was his work with students. He put as much effort and thoughtful consideration into giving his students detailed feedback as he did in designing and completing his own research agenda. His office door was always open, often spending hours at a time with one student or a Friday evening running a review session.

Bill thought well of everyone and was always ready to help, be it helping a student understand regression analysis, teaching a class for a colleague, fully participating in departmental and student committees, coaching soccer, moving furniture for a friend or shoveling a driveway for a neighbor. Bill was never satisfied with a partial effort. He tackled everything full bore!

Bill dedicated himself to his work, rising by 4 a.m. every day. If a "Hardest Worker" award was being doled out, Bill would win it every time. But, as a dear friend and colleague commented, "Yes, Bill was a hard worker, but beyond that, he was effective!"

Bill's playful sense of humor was with him until the end, when a doctor asked (pointing to Bill's son Christopher), "Who is this guy?" Bill's response was, "He's got my back." Bill was a dear husband, father, brother and friend whose time with us was prematurely cut short.

Bill will be remembered for his kindness, generosity, dedication and many acts of selflessness. He was married to Julie Thomas, his best friend and companion for 35 years. Together they had two sons, David and Christopher. All four family members were alumni of Syracuse University.

Services will be held at 2:30 p.m. Friday, June 7, in Hendricks Chapel, on the campus of Syracuse University. A reception will follow in Eggers Hall, Room 220.

Contributions: We invite you to honor Bill's life by supporting future M.P.A. students with a donation to the William Duncombe Memorial Graduate Scholarship, Maxwell School of Syracuse University, 200 Eggers Hall, Syracuse NY 13244. Link to Syracuse University obituary: [www.maxwell.syr.edu/news.aspx?id=107374186876](http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/news.aspx?id=107374186876)