

# **William “Bill” Lee**

**Born: May, 30, 1933**

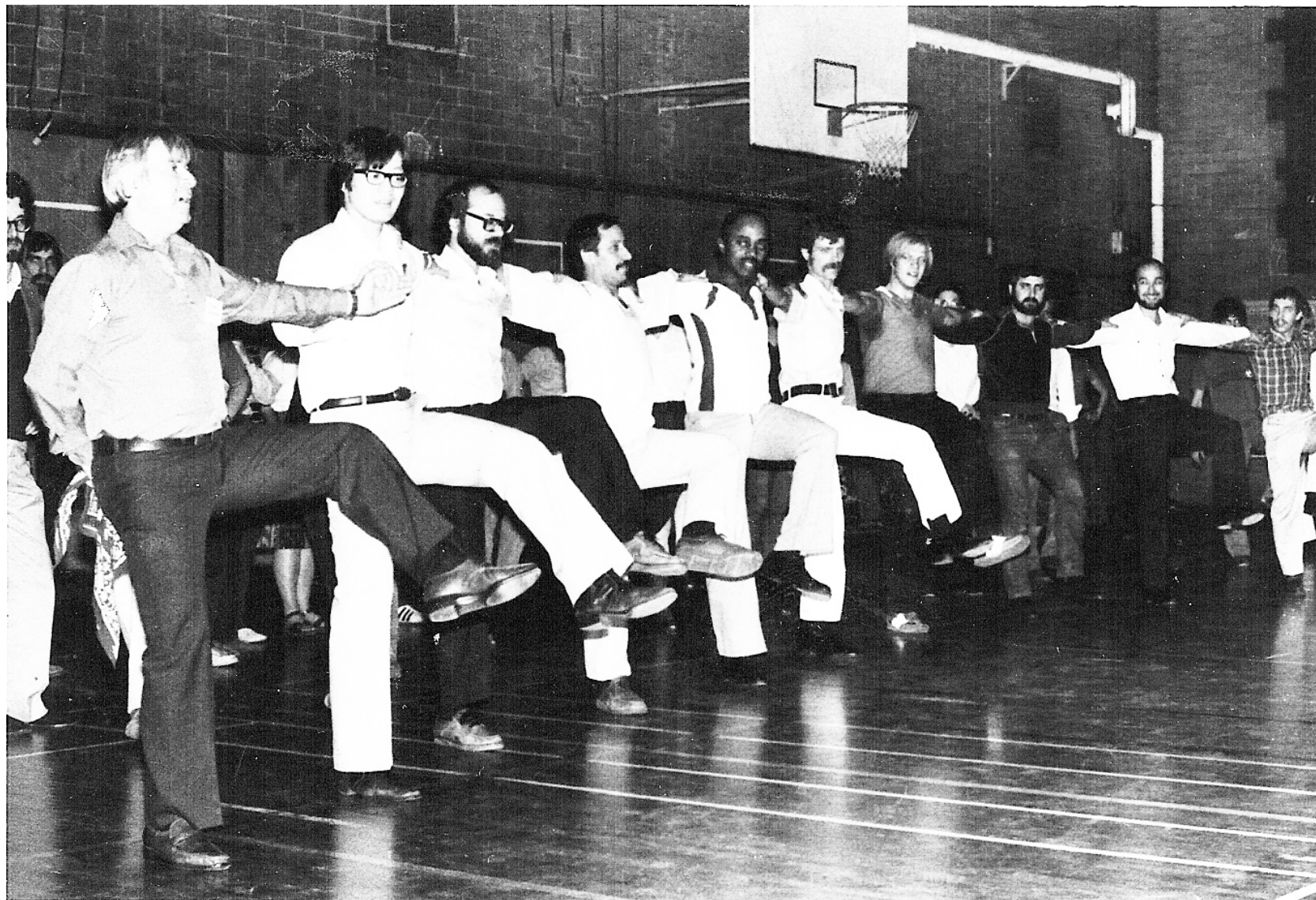
**Died: June 11, 2019**

**Internment: September 11, 2019**

A Military burial service for Bill Lee was held on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at 1:00pm at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood Illinois (South of Joliet)- 20953 W Hoff Road, Elwood, IL 60421



**Francis Parker HS or somewhere in Lincoln Park – Chicago, IL – early 1970s**  
**Bill Lee** (in white pants & red jacket), To Bill's left: Lois Diller, John Semmlow – to Bill's right  
Agnes Egoihian – Other end of line going backwards: Clare McKnight, Brayton Gray,  
Possibly Keith Kregier, Janet Thau, Herman Johnson, Pat Konieczny, rest not sure



**Macedonian Workshop at Ida Noyes Hall – University of Chicago – circa 1979-1982**

L to R: Atanas Kolarovski, John Kuo, Larry Hoey, Steve Spear, **Bill Lee**, Russell Frank, George Ornstein, Selcuk Cihangir, Hasan Şehitoğlu, Robert Sturm





**Hyde Park Lawn Party– circa 1980**

L to R: Susan Kessel, Tex Horning, **Bill Lee**

**(NOTE: Bill is scowling probably because did not like being photographed without his permission)**



**Hyde Park Lawn Party– circa 1980**

Left Side (L to R): unknown, Alyce Elmore, Jeanne Garvey

Middle Rear (L to R): James Collins, Bob Vladem

Right Side (L to R): **Bill Lee**, Kay Shannon, unknown, unknown, Sue Kessell, unknown





**Chaney Monge School Multicultural Fair – Crest Hill, IL 2007**  
L to R: **Bill Lee**, Carol Borysowicz, Wendy Mammoser, Paul Collins

Written on Bill's Tombstone

**Bill Lee**

**A gentle man and a  
gentleman**

# Comments from Dancers

Paul

Thank you for sending me this information regarding our friend Bill's internment. So ironic that it was on 9/11, our nation's day of mourning.

I was also thinking about Bill on that day and could picture him painting by the Montmartre in Paris with the strains of Edith Piaf and Billie Holliday singing in the background.

Bill was very generous in helping me in setting up for some of my parties for dancers in both apartments on Damen and Dayton.

It would be nice to reminisce more about times together with Bill, perhaps at a time when I can visit Chicago.

Mara Kins



# Comments from Dancers

Dear Paul

Thank you for the announcement of Bill's funeral and for putting together a small biography of his life.

I didn't realize how long folk dancing had been a part of his life. He was a very nice gentleman and

I will forever remember him as my Shibboleth Basadeh partner. I'm sure he will be missed at folk dancing.

Regards,  
Susan Yoshihara

# Comments from Dancers

Dear Paul

Gosh, that's sad news. Bill was always such a gentle man and good to be around. I remember him so well from the early days when you and Bill Sasso started your group at St Josaphat's. Quietly spoken but with a great sense of humour. As you point out, he was a private man and I suppose I didn't really know him that well - it just felt as though I did. I certainly can't imagine him being a drill instructor in the army but there you are - still waters run deep. It's very sad to think of him dying of a heart attack all alone in his flat and not being found for about a month - that's just not fair. Things like that shouldn't happen to people like Bill.

I shall think of him and any of the folk dance folk who might attend his funeral this afternoon (7:00pm our time). I'm sure you'll miss him at dancing every week. I shall miss him too even though I haven't seen him since 2006 when I came to your group at the Latvian Centre and he and I danced together. Lovely memories.

Dear Bill - RIP.

Love,  
Stephie Bowles Clark

# Comments from Dancers

Paul: Thank you SO much for this communique. I really appreciate that you shared all of your memories which cover very well the Bill I kind of knew & valued & always enjoyed dancing with. We had fun together joking around when we could & he had a way of cheering me up when I felt down about the state of our global affairs.

Don't know if I can make the burial service yet but I'm not ruling it out.

Fond regards,  
Pam Shaffer



# Comments from Dancers

Hi Paul,

Here is my remembrance of Bill. We used to bring our sketchbooks to dancing to share our progress. I also remember going to a solo show he had at a lakefront community center on the north side. There was some heavy duty stuff in his art!

Very nice man.

Erica Karp

# Comments from Dancers

Hi Paul,

Thanks for the notice on Bill. I liked him so much. He was one of my favorites there.

All the best

Peace & joy,

Jon Rabka

# Comments from Dancers

Bill was very welcoming to me when I first started going folk dancing in Evanston on Monday nights, about 10 years ago.

Lise Weisberger



# Comments from Dancers

Will miss Bill.

He was always very kind and friendly.

Would like to some of his paintings/drawings.

Hope someone has kept them.

Lois Diller

# Comments from Dancers

I am so sorry to hear. I only met him a few times at events in Chicago, but he was always so nice. My condolences to his dancing family.

Tina Weidinger (Milwaukee)

# Comments from Dancers

What a thorough and endearing memo about Bill Lee; I remember him now from the photos. A very nice man.

I hope that whoever officiates at the internment includes many of the descriptive tributes you wrote in your notice.

Best,

Pam Haze



# Comments from Dancers

He always made me feel so comfortable and welcome at dance. He was one of the few people I thought of as a dance friend. It's heartbreaking that he's gone. I had no idea he was that old already.

Do you know if any of his paintings are hanging somewhere permanently?

Stephanie McDaniel

# Comments from Dancers

I'm happy to have danced with Mr. Lee. "Three, four, five, look at him jive, Mr. Lee, Mr. Lee, oh, Mr. Lee...."—

Leigh Holden

# Comments from Dancers

I'm very sorry to hear about Bill.

I always enjoyed seeing him and dancing with him. He was friendly to me, even when I tried to wedge between you and him as you sat and/or danced side by side.

Sincerely,

Sanna Longden

# Comments from Dancers

Oh, man. Those photos bring back memories! Sorry to hear he died and that he died alone. I remember him from Fridays at Old Town in the mid to late 70s.

Xo

Susan Moss

# Comments from Dancers

Thanks for all of this background, Paul. We pass by one another and know so little until the end.

Love,

Arlene Brennan

# Comments from Dancers

Hello Paul,

What you wrote would definitely be a fitting eulogy for Bill. I assume that I may have encountered Bill at some point(s) during the many years that I have been folk dancing, but at this time, He doesn't look familiar to me, but that doesn't necessarily mean that he and I weren't present at the same time at some folk dance events in the distant past.

Your words clearly show that you had a long and special connection with Bill.

Regards,

Marshall Sorkin



# Comments from Paul Collins - 1

- I'd have to say that Bill was an avid folk dancer.
- I can remember my parents and I dancing with Bill Lee as early as 1960 at the Hyde Park Neighborhood Club monthly FunNite activities.
- In the early the middle 1960s when I started going to Folk Dances at the University of Chicago [Ida Noyes Hall (Sundays & International House (Tuesdays)] and the Old Town School of Folk Music (Nate Lofton's Wednesday group), I remember seeing Bill there too.
- When Ed Stern and I started the Monday beginners group at Ida Noyes Hall in 1970, Bill was a regular attendee.

# Comments from Paul Collins - 2

- When I was asked to re-start Folk Dancing at the Old Town School of Folk Music in the middle 1970s, Bill was a regular.
- When we moved folk dancing from the Old Town School to Jamnastics in the fall of 1981, Bill was there.
- When we resumed folk dancing at the Old Town School in the form of Wednesday night classes, sometime around 1984 or 1985, Bill was there.
- When Bill Sasso and I started the Mid North Group (now Ethnic Dance Chicago) at St Josaphat Church (in Lincoln Park) in 1987 or 1988, Bill was there.
- When Ethnic Dance Chicago moved to the Chicago Latvian Center in 2005, Bill was there.

# Comments from Paul Collins - 3

- For many years, at St Josaphat and the Latvian Center, Bill would come early to help setup for the dance, sometimes starting setup without me.
- For many years, Bill was a regular dancer at Monday night group in Evanston.
- For several years in the middle to late 2000s, Bill was an enthusiastic attendee of the Madison Folk Ball, though I could never get him to consider attending the Door County Folk Festival or June Camp.
- Bill was also an enthusiastic participant at Chicago SummerDance activities whenever there was some kind of Folk Dance activity there.

# Comments from Paul Collins - 4

- It's hard to imagine a Friday night dance at the Latvian Center without Bill.
- Bill did begin to cut back on his Friday dancing during bad weather in the winter of 2018-2019, but he did attend the 2018-2019 New Years' Eve Party at the Latvian Center.
- Towards the end of the Winter of 2019, Bill told me he had sold his car because he was tired of dealing with the snow and trying to find parking places after dancing.
- The demographics of the Lakeview neighborhood where he lived had changed to where there were just too many people attending bars late at night - people who took up all the parking places. Sometimes he would spend 30-40 minutes either looking for parking or shoveling his car in and out of snowbanks.

# Comments from Paul Collins - 5

- Bill loved the Global Dance Parties we produced in conjunction with the Old Town School of Folk Music.
- He also liked to attend a number of ethnic music concerts at the school. I got Bill a complimentary ticket to see the excellent Söndergö Tamburitza Group from Hungary on Sunday, April 7, 2019 and we ate dinner at Barba Yianni in Lincoln Square after that concert.
- We spoke several times about the Mayoral Elections this spring and exchanges thoughts about Lori Lightfoot versus Toni Preckwinkle.
- Bill Lee was a very private about his personal life and most people at dancing knew very little about him. Those who tried to pry were disappointed.

# Comments from Paul Collins - 5

- Bill and I attended the same High School in Chicago (Tilden Tech) but many years apart.
- We often discussed a few teachers we had in common who were at Tilden when he went there and were still there when I went there.
- Bill also got to engage in lively conversations about Tilden Tech when my former HS Spanish teacher (John Cullen) who attended dances at the Latvian Center for a while.
- Bill was ahead of me at Tilden and never told me the year of his graduating class. He declined to attend any HS reunion activities with me.



# Comments from Paul Collins - 6

- Bill served in the US Army in the 1950s. It's hard to imagine that the mild mannered Bill that we knew was a top-notch Drill Instructor (DI) in the military.
- When Bill's military commitment was up, the Army tried (in vain) all sorts of ways to get him to re-enlist and extend his tour. He refused adamantly, saying that his time for this was up.
- Bill served as a Social Worker for senior citizens of many different ethnicities for many years.
- He got a big kick out of telling some of his clients from various ethnic groups that he knew dances and songs and a few language phrases from their heritage.

# Comments from Paul Collins - 7

- Bill was also an artist (painter and sketcher) who presented his art in shows in a number of galleries and art shows around Chicago.
- Bill also loved to travel to France to visit art galleries and museums there. I recall at least 2 or 3 summer trips that he made to France where he missed several weeks of dancing, but he always returned to dancing as soon as he was back from his travels.
- Bill was also an avid runner and bicyclist and spent a lot of time on the bike paths and running paths in Hyde Park and Lincoln Park.

# Comments from Paul Collins - 8

- Bill also loved to travel to France to visit art galleries and museums there. I recall at least 2 or 3 summer trips that he made to France where he missed several weeks of dancing, but he always returned to dancing as soon as he was back from his travels.
- Bill was also an avid runner and bicyclist and spent a lot of time on the bike paths and running paths in Hyde Park and Lincoln Park.
- Bill had family in the Chicago area but between the City and County authorities who investigated his case, they were not able to locate any relatives.

# Comments from Paul Collins - 9

- Bill passed away of a heart attack in his Lakeview condo sometime between the middle of May 2019 (the last time that I had spoken with him) and June 11, 2019 when the police and condo management officials went into his condo and found his body.
- I've looked through many photos and surprisingly only found a few that included Bill Lee. Photos I've found are at the beginning of this presentation.

# Comments from Paul Collins - 10

- On occasion, when Bill would walk into dancing, I would play the 1957 rock 'n roll song "Mister Lee" by the Bobbettes. He would get a kick out of that.
- Paraphrasing a line from that song: "One, two, three, we miss you Mister Lee"
- If anyone has any remembrances about Bill Lee, please feel free to send to me: [paul@ethnicedance.net](mailto:paul@ethnicedance.net)