



## Mr. William F. Kraft

April 14, 1952 - June 27, 2023

William F. “Bill” Kraft, 71, died peacefully at his home in Los Osos on June 27, 2023. Sue, his wife of 45 years, and Molly, his Golden Retriever, were at his side.

Born April 14, 1952, in Rockford, Illinois, to Dr. Alexander and Margaret (Ravlin) Kraft, Bill was second youngest among his five brothers and sisters.

In his youth, Bill was a member of Boy Scout Troop 41 of the Blackhawk Area Council. For him, his years in scouting were more than a coming-of-age checkbox. The scout-sponsored float plane trips to the wilderness reaches of Quetico National Park, Canada, to canoe, camp, and fish were opportunities to bond with his Dad and brother Jim. The experiences also had the profound effect to cultivate in him what would be his lifelong sense of adventure, and instill in him a self-confidence that forever made him a giant to anyone he met.

He attended the University of Missouri, and later graduated with a degree in education from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. Shortly after graduating, he moved to Northern California to be closer to his brothers, and it was there he began his career in teaching.

Standing over 6’ 8” tall, Bill easily commanded the attention of his elementary school students, and perhaps not so inadvertently, the attention of a

colleague, Sue Childers. She would quickly and forever become the love of his life. They took advantage of their convenient, coinciding vacations, and were soon on a summer-long backpacking excursion to Europe, cementing their shared excitement for adventure. In 1984, they postponed work for 6 months to travel the world. Europe, North Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Back at work, they spent 10 consecutive summer vacations traveling to the UK, and their favorite places in Ireland and Scotland. The Caribbean was also a favorite destination. Their shared passion for travel and learning and meeting new people from all over the world never waned.

Intensely proud of his Polish heritage, Bill was eager to recount his father's and cherished aunts' immigration to the US from Nowy Sacz, Poland, at the end of World War I. He embraced their determination and carried it with him always. He also embraced the cherished foodways of Poland. He was never far from his mother's homemade pierogies or Polish borscht.

Bill continued to teach and soon earned a Masters in Education degree from Cal Poly. Teaching led Bill to sales, and eventually to a position as corporate trainer for a prominent micro chip manufacturer. He once again was traveling the world, this time to deliver technical training programs to the company's global workforce. Adventure, self-confidence, and charisma made him an outstanding public presenter. He also had a keen sense of humor and flawless comedic timing that would rival any Jerry Lewis skit. He was admired for his teaching and learning prowess; and his legendary ability to bring a smile to your face whether you were in the front office or the doctor's office.

For those who knew him, it wasn't just his height or stature that made him unforgettable, but it was his capacity for empathy that set him apart from the rest of us. Though he struggled with health issues over the years, he was always there when you needed him..., needed something..., needed anything. His capacity for caring was boundless.

His love of road biking and mountain hiking were equally boundless. He was an accomplished cyclist on the narrow roads of the Central Coast, the roads of Mount Tamalpais, and the roads encompassing the urban hills of the Castro District in San Francisco. Among his hiking accomplishments was summiting Mt. Whitney in 1995, scarcely a year after his bone marrow transplant. He shared the journey with Sue. It was another adventure for them, and another demonstration of his tenacity and perseverance.

He was a wonderful son, brother, and husband, and the greatest uncle and friend. He was courageous and loving.

There are some people who simply and fully enrich your life. Bill was one of them. In the words of Johnny Mercer, when the angels ask us to recall the thrill of it all, we will tell them we remember you.

Bill is survived by his wife Sue, sisters and brothers Maxine (George) Gaffney, Hillsdale, MI; Alexander Kraft Jr., San Jose, CA; James Kraft, Santa Rosa, CA; and Peggy Kraft (Bill Filler), Palo Alto, CA. He is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews, and grand nieces and nephews and by his dearest friend, Rosie.

He was preceded in death by his parents Margaret and Dr. Alexander Kraft; and sister-in-law Jane (Robertson) Kraft, Santa Rosa, CA.

In lieu of flowers the family asks you to consider placing a gift in Bill's honor in one of the following charities:

Woods Humane Society in San Luis Obispo, (<https://woodshumanesociety.org/>)

Canzona Women's Ensemble, (<https://www.canzonawomen.org/support-us.ht>

ml)

San Luis Obispo Master Chorale, (<https://slomasterchorale.org/support-us/>)

A memorial service is planned for a later date.