

A brief biography of William Raymond (Orosa) Gregory

William Gregory (Bill) was born June 16, 1923, to Lois Richards and Jose Y. Orosa. Shortly after his birth, he was adopted by William Adolphus Gregory and Etta Lincoln Wendt Gregory. It is said that while Etta had a child (Ceta Wendt born 1907) from her first marriage, she desperately wanted a son and therefore adopted Bill.

Bill was raised in a poor home in Ruston, Washington which is now part of Tacoma. His adoptive father was a carpenter for Asarco, a copper smelting facility that became infamous for its environmental impact. Etta was a doting mother who dearly loved her adopted son. The fact that Bill was adopted was kept a deep family secret to which even he was not privy. His half-sister Ceta knew he was adopted, but if she knew any true facts, she took them with her to her grave.

Bill was educated in Tacoma, went to Stadium High School where he played basketball, football and track and was Student Council President. Upon graduation, he enlisted in the Navy and was trained as a Navy pilot but never saw active duty since World War II ended during his final training in Florida. During that time, Bill returned to Tacoma to marry his high school sweetheart, Thora June Holden.

Upon discharge from the Navy, Bill returned to Washington State and attended the University of Washington, graduating circa 1945 in Business Administration with an emphasis in accounting. He returned to Tacoma and became a Certified Public Accountant for a local firm where he quickly rose to the top, becoming partner and finally managing partner (1955) of Knight, Vale and Gregory, then the largest regional accounting firm on the west coast. Bill was extremely active in local civic clubs like Young Business Men of Tacoma and Rotary as well as Tacoma Yacht Club. Being very active in the accounting profession, he also rose to the top of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants holding the chairmanship 1979-1980.

While chairman of the AICPA, Bill was presented to Her Royal Highness, Queen Elizabeth II of England and Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, as part of the Centenary Conference in London.

Bill and Thora had three daughters, Kathryn Jane Gregory (Pickard) born 1949, Joan Carol Gregory born 1951 and Nancy Lynn Gregory (McElheran) born 1954. In 1973,

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Bill finished his education with a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Puget Sound, graduating at the same time Joan received her undergraduate certificate, majoring in English. Nancy holds a BA in Music from the same institution (later earning a degree in Pharmacy from the University of Washington) while Kathy holds a degree in French from Whitworth College. Bill and Thora divorced in 1958. He later married Virginia Barnes and legally adopted her daughter Wanda in the 1960's.

Personal Notes:

Nancy - Dad was a gregarious, fun loving and charismatic man who was always curious about those around him. (I remember him often striking up conversations with the cabbies in New York when we were there.) Dad is still an important figure in accountancy, most recently being quoted in *The Journal of Accountancy*, 2005. Even our son, Kyle, found his college accounting professor was impressed that Kyle had such a well-known grandfather. Dad loved cruising the waters of Puget Sound on up into Canada on his yacht. I was fortunate to join him on many of those excursions. He enjoyed snow skiing, golfing, and hiking summiting Mount Rainier in the early 1970's with Lou Whitaker. Dad loved to travel, and he was a wonderful dancer spinning his second wife Virginia and I around the dance floor at various accounting conventions. He was an endless romantic taking all of us to Hawaii, his favorite destination, on multiple occasions. Dad and I shared the love of music. While I lived with him during college, we would sit at a player piano and play and sing our favorite songs. I still cherish the memory of him whistling as he walked around the house, which I find my son, Kevin does as well! Dad gave unconditional love. I've missed him desperately since his death in April of 1981.

Joan – I often reflect on all the gifts I have received from my remarkable father, Bill Gregory. He imparted to me a love of adventure, of nature, of the mountains, of exploring our local waters and islands on a boat, of white sand beaches and tropical islands. He took me to New York when I was in my twenties, and we walked all over the city, with me trying to keep up with his long, forceful strides. Dad imparted to me a love of reading, and I still cherish his inscription in the thesaurus he gave me: "May words and their full meanings always be important to you." He set an

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inspiring example of always striving for the top and making the most of yourself, whether it is excelling in one's profession, body- surfing the biggest waves, or climbing higher than anyone else up a glacier. As Kathy says, when Dad walked into a room, everyone noticed him—his striking good looks and his radiating charm. Dad taught me the importance of a firm handshake and looking people directly in the eye. Friends I have not seen since college ask me about him because he made such an impression on them. I am an incredibly proud and blessed person to have had William R. Gregory as my father.

Kathy – I remember my dad for his commanding presence when he walked into a room. He was tall, confident, vibrant, and so very handsome, with a big, embracing smile. His warm, gracious personality coupled with his smart business and management skills and personal drive helped propel him to his many professional accomplishments. He deeply loved us, his “three girls”, being there for important occasions in our lives and including in us in important events in his. Excited for the birth of his firstborn grandchild, my son, he traveled across the country to my home in Massachusetts in time to bring us home from the hospital. Two of my favorite photos are of my dad holding my son. I so miss this man who left us too soon....