



Dr. William Bright Fowler

February 19, 1931 - July 12, 2025

Dr. William Bright Fowler, M.D., 94, of Asheville, passed away peacefully on the morning of July 12th, 2025.

Bill was born on February 19, 1931, in Columbus, Georgia, the son of the late William Hilburn Fowler and Lillian Self Fowler. He grew up in Columbus and graduated from Columbus High School in 1949, where he was known as "Billy." His Senior Yearbook, *The Cohiscan*, noted that he was a cheerleader, one of the Senior Class Attractives, best dressed, and that Billy hoped to be a doctor someday. Bill went on to do just that.

Dr. Fowler attended Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, where he was awarded a Bachelor of Science in Medicine after three years, in 1952. While at Mercer, Bill was a member of Phi Delta Theta Fraternity, Phi Eta Sigma, a cheerleader, participated in R.O.T.C., Varsity Track, and was part of the Ciceronian Literary Society.

In October 1952, Bill started medical school at Bowman Gray School of Medicine of Wake Forest College (now Wake Forest University School of Medicine), where he was a member of Phi Chi and the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. Bill received his Doctor of Medicine degree from Bowman Gray in 1956. Following his medical school graduation, he headed north for his internship appointment at Philadelphia General Hospital from

1956-1957. He returned to Winston-Salem in 1958, completing a year of assistant residency in pathology at N.C. Baptist Hospital. During this time, he met the love of his life and future wife, Anna Jane Bridges, a senior at Salem College.

Quickly disheartened by the lack of patient interaction in pathology, Bill moved to Atlanta to start a residency in Internal Medicine at Emory University. He married his bride of 66 years, Jane, in May of 1959. Soon after, Bill was drafted into the United States Army as a Captain in the Medical Corps. From August 1959 to 1961, the newlyweds were stationed at Walson Army Hospital in Fort Dix, New Jersey, where they welcomed their first child, a son, Marc. After his honorable discharge in August of 1961, Bill returned to Atlanta with his young family and fulfilled his duties as Senior Assistant Resident in Internal Medicine at Emory University Hospital.

In the fall (October) of 1962, during the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Bill packed up his family and expectant wife in his 1956 Thunderbird "Classic Convertible" and arrived in Asheville, North Carolina, to practice medicine. In December 1962, the couple welcomed their second child, a daughter, Holly.

A January 16, 1963, article in the Asheville Citizen-Times announced the opening of Dr. William B. Fowler's new office at 573 Merrimon Ave. In April 1963, Dr. Fowler permanently moved his office to Suite F in the Medical-Dental Building at 675 Biltmore Avenue. He would remain at this location as a solo practitioner in Internal Medicine and Cardiology for 48 years, until his retirement in 2011.

For his entire career, Dr. Fowler practiced "old-school" medicine. Being on staff at St. Joseph's Hospital, Mission, and Aston Park, he was continually making rounds, always 'on call,' and even made the occasional house call up until retirement. He was known for his sense of humor, compassionate and

caring bedside manner, and expertise as a diagnostician. Bill was a Diplomate of the American Board of Internal Medicine. Some of his other past appointments, to name a few, included serving as Past President of the Buncombe County unit of the American Heart Association, Director of the Coronary Care Unit at St. Joseph's, Memorial Mission, and Aston Park Hospitals. Dr. Fowler was Chairman of the Cardiovascular Committee at St. Joseph's and was instrumental in establishing the first Intensive Care and Coronary Care Units in Asheville. While the Electrocardiography Department at St. Joseph's was under his medical direction, Dr. Fowler was responsible for performing many groundbreaking treatments. His wife, Jane, remembers watching him perform the first successful cardioversion in Western North Carolina. He also served as Staff Physician at Deerfield Retirement Community for many years. One of his most rewarding medical experiences was a month-long mission trip to South Africa through Trinity Episcopal Church, where he lived and treated patients in and around a small rural village.

In his "free" time, Bill was an avid tennis player, alongside his wife Jane, winning numerous Club Championships at the Country Club of Asheville, the Biltmore Forest Country Club, Asheville Racquet Club, and Aston Park Tennis Center. One of his funniest recollections was hosting the late Bobby Riggs when he came to Asheville to play an exhibition match at Aston Park. Bill also enjoyed reading, listening to classical music, painting (he was accomplished in watercolor), playing golf, fly-fishing, and exercising regularly at the downtown YMCA. For over a decade, Bill battled Parkinson's disease, which he self-diagnosed. In his final years, he spent many hours working crossword puzzles and word finders to keep his mind sharp.

Bill was a member of the Biltmore Forest Country Club, a senior member of the Rhododendron Royal Brigade of Guards, Dr. Robert Boerner's book club,

and a long-time member of Trinity Episcopal Church. Bill epitomized the definition of a true Southern Gentleman in every sense of the word.

He was preceded in death by his son, William Marcus Fowler, in 2017. His brother, Winfred "Snooky" Hilburn Fowler, died one day after Bill, on July 13th, 2025. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Anna Jane (Bridges) Fowler; his sister-in-law, Joyce Land Fowler of Columbus, Georgia; daughter Holly Fowler Strauss and her husband, Andy, of Asheville; two granddaughters, Spencer Caroline Strauss of Asheville, and Courtney Strauss Davis and her husband, Brad, of Jacksonville Beach, Florida; two great-grandchildren, Andrew James Davis and William Christopher Davis; niece Jennifer Lynn Fowler of Basel, Switzerland., and her daughters, Hattie and Faye; nephew Wade Hilburn Fowler, and his wife Polly (Marcum) of Columbus, Georgia, and their daughters, Sally and Louise; and a nephew and two nieces through marriage, Samuel Edward Bridges, Lisa Bridges, and Michelle Bridges Sharpe, all of Greensboro, North Carolina.

The family wishes to thank Liz Arrowood, Angie Grimmitt, Mary Moody, and Mike Stanton for their compassionate home care. Many thanks are also extended to all the nurses and caregivers in skilled nursing at Givens Estates Health Center, especially Emily Rawlings, and Four Seasons Hospice Nurse, Tim Barrett.

A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. on August 9th, 2025, at Trinity Episcopal Church, 60 Church Street, Asheville, NC, with Reverend Dr. R. Scott White officiating. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to ABCCM, www.abccm.org, or MANNA FoodBank, www.mannafoodbank.org, in Bill's honor.

Cemetery Details

Trinity Memorial Gardens

60 Church Street
Asheville, NC 28801
<http://www.trinityasheville.org/>

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG 9. 11:00 AM (ET)

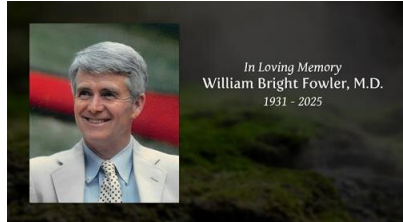
Trinity Episcopal Church
60 Church Street
Asheville, NC 28801

Officiated by Rev. Dr. R. Scott White

Tribute Wall



“ *Morris Funeral & Cremation Care created a Tribute Video in memory of Dr. William Bright Fowler*



Morris Funeral Home - July 22, 2025 at 04:23 PM

BM

“ *Dr. Fowler was a friend, my physician, and a fly-fishing buddy. The family can be proud of who he was and all that he did. Barry Pate MD*

Barry Pate MD - July 24, 2025 at 05:02 PM

HD

“ *The Board, Staff, and participants of ABCCM were saddened to hear of Dr. Fowlers passing. We are deeply grateful to the Fowler family for remembering ABCCM in lieu of flowers. Their generosity will help continue our mission of serving those in need in our community. We are lifting all who loved Dr. Fowler in our prayers.*

Helen Dowling - July 24, 2025 at 10:11 AM

LS

“ My name is Linda Soesbee & I became acquainted with Bill (as we knew him), when he joined the musical group my husband played in. It was known as Strings & Things. There was an assortment of men, medical, professional, & just ones that joined in for a while then left. I remember that Bill was always upbeat & friendly. Like to think he enjoyed being there as much as we enjoyed him. My prayers to his family.

Linda R Soesbee - July 21, 2025 at 09:45 AM

RM

“ Mrs. Fowler and family:

My name is Ralph Morris and I was born and raised in Asheville, attending and graduating from Asheville High School. Prior to my freshman year at Appalachian State University I worked on the tennis courts at The Asheville Country Club and I remember you and your husband well. Bob Mickey was the tennis pro at the time. Just wanted to express my condolences to you and your family.

Ralph Morris - July 18, 2025 at 07:30 PM