



Dr. Francis Williard Rushing PhD

JUL 30, 1939 - MAR 18, 2026



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Dr. Francis Williard Rushing PhD

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Bill Rushing was born July 30, 1939, the son of Frances Barnes Rushing and Lewis Carroll Rushing of Savannah, Georgia. He died peacefully at his home in Reva, Virginia, surrounded by family, on March 18, 2026. Bill spent his childhood years in Savannah, excelling at school and helping his grandmother at her corner grocery store. He graduated from Savannah High School in 1957. Bill displayed an excellent academic prowess early in life and parlayed his achievements into an ROTC scholarship to the University of Georgia. He majored in Economics, pledged Phi Delta Theta fraternity, and graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1961. Bill then started his Ph.D. in Economics at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill with a concentration in Soviet Studies and Russian. While at Chapel Hill, he met a vivacious Army brat named Barbara Brownfield, the love of his life, and they married at Fort Bragg, NC in 1963. Together, the young couple moved to Arlington, VA as Bill served 4 years in the Air Force with the Defense Intelligence Agency in support of the Vietnam War. After the birth of his first two children, completion of his military service, and graduation from UNC with his Ph.D., Bill and Bobbie moved their young family to Athens, Georgia for his first job as an Associate University Professor. This was the start of a lifelong dedication to education and teaching. They would add two more children to the family as Bill served on the faculties of the University of Georgia, College of William & Mary, and most significantly, Georgia State University. His tenure there lasted over 30 years and he held the distinguished position of Chair of Private Enterprise. Bill was not just a teacher; he was a champion of education and entrepreneurship. He traveled the world, including extensive, repeated trips to China, Brazil, the Soviet Union and Russia, extolling the importance of early childhood education in math and science and enhancing his own understanding of how best to teach it. He finally retired from active teaching in 2005.



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Bobbie and Bill spent their retired years wisely. They moved to Madison, Georgia where Bill was fully immersed in the local community. He put his very active mind to helping raise money and awareness for local organizations like Episcopal Church of the Advent, the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center and the Historic Preservation Commission. He loved his adopted Madison community enthusiastically. He and Bobbie restored a lovely antebellum home and gardens where they found enormous joy.

In their final chapter, Bobbie and Bill moved from Georgia to Virginia where, once again, they restored a beautiful old home outside of Culpeper, Virginia. To the last, Bill loved his beautiful gardens, his view of the Blue Ridge mountains and the frequent visits of his children and grandchildren.

For all of his 86 years, Bill's mind was never idle and his principles never faltered. He was a man who quietly led by example and who offered kindness and respect in every situation. He will be greatly and universally missed.

Bill is survived by his beloved wife of nearly 63 years, Bobbie; his son Todd (Laurie) and their children and grandchildren – Heather (Kyle), Shane, Colette, Knox and Hudson; his daughter Elizabeth (Tony) and their children Madeleine and Julia; his son Stephen; and his daughter Virginia (Michael) and their children Noelle, Emmy and Collins. They were his world and his reason. He spent his life giving all he had to his family – his pride and his joy.

A memorial service for Bill Rushing will be held at Episcopal Church of the Advent, 338 Academy Street in Madison, Georgia, on April 11, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. A reception will follow at Madison-Morgan Cultural Center, 434 South Main Street, at 12:30 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to one of Bill's favorite causes:

Dollywood Foundation (supporting childhood literacy and educational success);
<https://donate.imaginationlibrary.com>

Public Broadcasting Service – PBS (most prominent provider of educational programming in the US); <https://Pbs.org>




Events


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Memorial Service

 **Saturday**, April 11, 2026

 11:00 AM ET

 **Episcopal Church of the Advent**
338 Academy St, Madison GA 30650-1545





Tribute Wall

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Anonymous planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Francis.



April 13 at 10:51 AM



Lynn, Garrett & Katie, Savannah & Seth sent a Country Basket Blooms to the Rushing family.



April 10 at 10:59 AM



Lynn, Garrett & Katie, Savannah & Seth planted a Memorial Tree in honor of Francis.



April 10 at 10:59 AM



Tracy Russell posted:

I had the honor of being a caretaker for Mr Bill. The first time I ever met him he was sound asleep on his front porch and he was so peaceful looking I did not know whether to wake him up or not so I kind of just stood there feeling silly for a few minutes and I'm guessing he sensed me standing there not knowing what to do and he woke up with the big smile and said oh hi there. He invited me to sit down the porch with him and we had our first conversation of many. I immediately knew that I was going to enjoy my time that I got to spend with him. From our chats in the kitchen to longer conversations on our trips to and from different appointments I always seemed to learn something and I never tired of hearing him explain things or just talk about anything and everything. He never got excited about anything but when the talk switched to his family I could tell how proud he was of them all from his beautiful wife Bobby to his four accomplished children and grandchildren along with his nieces and nephews. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing about all of their their education, accomplishments , and even where his children's names came from. The happiest I did see him was right before and after Thanksgiving of this past year where he and Bobby hosted dinner at their beautiful home and it was filled with all the people together at one time that he loved so much. He also thoroughly enjoyed all of the cooking and leftovers! I am truly honored that I got to know and spend time with this smart, kind, respected and just overall a wonderful man. May you rest in peace my friend.

March 22 at 9:08 AM



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Debbie Feaganes posted:

To the Rushing Family You have my DEEPEST SYMPATHY of you love ones passing and never knew he lived close by. Sincerely, Debbie Feaganes

March 21 at 8:19 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Francis by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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