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In Memoriam - William ("Bill") James Phillips

Posted by **Faculty of Engineering** on December 7, 2023 in [In Memoriam](#)

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of our former colleague, professor and Department Head, Dr. William "Bill" James Phillips. Bill died peacefully on December 2, 2023 with his family by his side after a short, but brave, battle with esophageal cancer. Our condolences and thoughts are with his family.

Born in 1949, Bill was raised in the picturesque town of Gananoque, Ontario. Blessed with a brilliant mind and a natural affinity for numbers, Bill completed his Bachelor's (Mathematics and Engineering) and Master's (Mathematics) degrees at Queen's University before heading west to complete his Doctorate (Mathematics) degree at the University of British Columbia. While at UBC, Bill and his wife Rosemary started their family with the birth of their son, Dan, followed by their daughter, Kim.

The offer of a position in academia resulted in Bill and Rosemary moving across the country to Halifax, where Bill began his career as a professor at the Technical University of Nova Scotia, which later became part of Dalhousie University. Bill continued as a professor and served as Head of the

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Department of Engineering Mathematics and Internetworking from 1990 until his retirement in 2019. During his 38-year tenure, he taught thousands of to-be engineers and graduated dozens of Master's and Ph.D. students – some of them now professors themselves. His research contributions were numerous and diverse, garnering nearly 1800 citations, with his most recent research interests being wireless sensor networks, wave division multiplexing, and digital signal processing.

Bill's colleagues have described him as an outstanding leader, having successfully led the department through several turbulent periods while always having the academic and personal well-being of his colleagues as the top priority. He was a mentor to many department members, and his rare combination of kindness, generosity, willingness to help, and ability to take one's problems to heart as if they were his own, will truly be missed.

In his personal life, Bill was both a "treky" and "techie". Dan and Kim's childhood Saturday mornings were spent with their Dad watching re-runs of the original Star Trek series, and supper hours were spent watching The Next Generation and Deep Space Nine. Bill was always ahead of the technological curve and his passion for computers and everything tech-gadgety meant the family home was filled with the latest and greatest technologies, as well as all the past models (which he took great pleasure in keeping up to date with the latest operating systems). Bill was the go-to IT support for his kids, grandkids, and friends, and if he didn't have the answer right away, they could be certain he would spend the time figuring it out.

Kind, patient, loving, thoughtful, generous and analytical. Bill will be tremendously missed by all.

Bill's family would like to thank his closest colleagues, Dr. Bill Robertson and Dr. Serguei Iakovlev, for their lifetime friendships with "BillP."

In Bill's honour, donations in his memory can be made to the [William Phillips Memorial Fund](#) – <http://giving.dal.ca/williamphillips> to financially assist future Engineering students who demonstrate excellence in linear algebra.

During his time in the hospital, Dad received multiple blood products that helped to extend his time. Heading into this holiday season, please consider making an appointment to donate your blood or plasma to the [Canadian Blood Services](#).



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