



## William Goldman

May 15, 1950 - December 9, 2023

William "Bill" Goldman passed away in Boca Raton, FL, from Alzheimer's Disease on December 9, 2023. He was surrounded by family in his final moments.

Bill was born in New York, NY, on May 15, 1950, to Audrey and Louis Goldman. Just after Bill became a big brother to Dale Feeley, nee Goldman, the Goldman family moved to Chicago, IL, then north to Wilmette, IL, where Bill attended New Trier High School. He then attended Knox College and transferred to Northern Illinois University (Class of 1973), where he majored in Philosophy and minored in Art. He was the first person Debra "Debbie" Goldman, nee Davis, of Rockford, IL, met at NIU, and they fell madly in love. They married shortly after graduation. In their 50 years of marriage, they raised two children, Becca Goldman, married to Carolyn Galayda, and Justin Goldman. In 2013, Bill's twin grandchildren, Levi and Jonah Galayda, were born, and Bill became the most fun PopPop. He was very close to his family and often lived near them in the Chicago, Miami, and San Francisco areas until 2016, when Bill and Debbie retired and moved to Boca Raton, Florida.

In the early 1970s, Bill began to pursue his dream of becoming a magician and quickly established himself as an accomplished and respected professional. He started working at a restaurant in Chicago and quickly moved on to working at trade shows and on stages around the world. Not only was he a talented, hilarious performer, but Bill also created many popular magic tricks, including *Monkey in the Middle*, *Magic Yarn*, and *One for the Money*. His "Magic Bar and Grill" zine became widely known for both its sleight-of-hand content and for the entertaining stories and anecdotes he wrote. He also wrote several monthly columns for magic journals. His skills as a magician were matched with incredible creativity, quick wit, and humor; he could play guitar, paint, sculpt, weave baskets, build furniture, write captivating stories and beautiful songs, and regularly make his friends, family, and audiences laugh until it hurt. He was celebrated and loved by those whose lives he touched. The world will miss the incredible love and magic of Bill Goldman!

Celebration of Life for Bill and his wife, Debbie will be February 22, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. at

Grace Funeral & Cremation Services; 4301 N. Main St. Rockford. Funeral Celebrant Jen Thompson will officiate. Live stream of the service can be viewed here: <https://my.gather.app/remember/william-and-debra-goldman> Immediately following the service, Debbie and Bill's family will host a reception at the funeral home. Share a memory or condolence at [www.graceFh.com](http://www.graceFh.com).

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

FEB **22**. 11:00 AM - 12:45 PM (CT)

Grace Funeral & Cremation Services

4301 N. Main St.

Rockford, IL 61103

# Tribute Wall



“ *Grace Funeral & Cremation Services created a Webcast in memory of William Goldman*



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**Grace Funeral & Cremation Services** - February 25, 2025 at 04:47 PM



“ *I grew up with Bill in High School. We were a part of a group of friends. He, another friend and I used to sing Helplessly, Hoping together. Bill was also an accomplished guitar player. We continued our friendship through college and after. I remember visiting him and Deb out at NIU. A visit to him always included a visit of smiles and laughter. We all knew how smart he was. I visited him at Knox college. We all expected him to be a writer or scientist. Of course he fooled us all. Something else he became very good at. I will miss his smile and his friendship. Goodbye Bill. Keep smiling.*

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**Jerome Padorr** - February 22, 2025 at 12:46 PM

SE

“ *1 file added to the album Bill*



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**Seth** - February 22, 2025 at 11:29 AM

HC

“ There are so many memories I could share when it comes to reflecting on the moments spent with Bill. In each one of them there is a warm glow provided by his incredible enthusiasm. I first met Bill while working the same trade show in 1983. We instantly connected, working countless shows together through the years. If you ask what made him so unique. Well,

*Bill always seemed to find joy from the simplest of life's gifts. He could be captivated by a stray leaf, or an odd-looking stone. Or, by so many of the things that go unnoticed by the average person. That's because he understood the beauty of experiencing life's splendor.*

*One could not be down in the dumps when hanging with Bill. His very presence would drive it out of you. His inherent desire to entertain total strangers was always apparent. It was a childhood gift that life's challenges extinguish in many of us. But not Bill.*

*He was so highly respected among the global magic community for his creative mind and quick wit. That respect transcended to the thousands of audience members he regaled through the years.*

*Bill had something else going for him. Debbie. From what I saw, she let Bill be Bill. She never seemed to try and re-shape him into her idea of who he should be. On the contrary, she supported him at every turn. If matches are supposedly made in heaven, then Bill and Debbie are the greatest example of a match made in heaven. And, now they are together again.*

*Thinking of all the times we shared, through all the years, and knowing there will be no more times ahead, fills my eyes with tears. But the sweet moments we shared will remain forever.*

*Harrison (Harry) Carroll*

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**harrison carroll** - February 11, 2025 at 05:02 PM

FZ

“ I first met Bill & Deb in the late 80s and Bill and I became fast friends. We lived near each other, and in addition to a professional relationship on the tradeshow floor, we also became personal friends. Bill was always very generous with his ideas and had one of the most devious magical minds I've ever known. His manner was mild, but nefarious (in a good way), and he would not only entertain you, he'd also fool the hell out of you. I missed him when they moved, and I miss him even more now.

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**Fred Zimmerman** - February 11, 2025 at 02:57 PM