

## William George (Bill) Dallas 1929 – 2020

Bill Dallas died on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020 following a short illness. He was in the 92<sup>nd</sup> year of a distinguished and fully lived life.

The older of two sons, Bill was born in Garvagh, Co. Derry on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1929 to William George Dallas and Mary Margaret Frances (née Johnston) who hailed from Lanesborough, Co. Longford. Bill was immensely proud of his grandfather, George Dallas, a keen photographer who recorded many images during his travels in Northern Ireland in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. These images, which depict life in an Ireland long gone, have been exhibited on numerous occasions.



He received his primary education at Garvagh National School and his secondary education at Coleraine Academical Institution.

He began his forestry education at Trinity College Dublin in October 1949, with two other students - Graham Sinclair and myself. He was conferred with a BA and an Agr (Forest) B degree in October 1954. His forestry career began with the Forest Service Northern Ireland in 1955 where he worked for a short time in the Belfast H.Q. before moving to Omagh as the District Forest Officer for the West Tyrone District.

In 1960 he was awarded a W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant to study at the University of Oregon and graduated with a Master's degree in Forestry in 1961. On his return from America he served for 2-3 years as a Research Officer. He published an article in *Irish Forestry*, Vol. 22, (2), 1965 entitled "The Philosophy of American Education" based on his studies in the US, and in 1961 he delivered a lecture in Dublin on "Water Conservation in the US" and in Strabane in 1966, together with Bill Wright, on "Forestry in America".

He planned and developed Gortin Glen Forest Park, the second forest park in Northern Ireland, which opened in 1967. His pioneering work here earned him the Civic Trust (UK) and New Ireland Award.

In 1971 he was head-hunted by Tara Mines Limited/Outokumpu Zinc and moved south to work as Manager of Environmental and Community Affairs at the large lead and zinc mine which was being developed at Navan, Co. Meath. He developed Tara's environmental and spatial planning strategy and co-ordinated the team of consultants and advisers, which produced Ireland's first environmental impact study long before such studies were statutorily required. He developed and directed Tara's innovative Community Relations Programme in addition to preparing the Closure and

Rehabilitation plans for both Tynagh and Gortdrum mines. He was a member of Tara's Project Management Team which brought the huge development into operation without a single day lost to industrial or local community unrest. He also established Tara's Environmental Services Unit and Tara's environmental management, surveillance and air and water quality monitoring programmes.

As well as moving to a new job, Bill set to work on getting a wife and in 1975 he married Helena Hogan from Portumna and made his home in Martry, Co. Meath.

As with everything Bill did, he did an outstanding job of developing an environmental policy for the industry and when he left Tara Mines in 1987 he was much sought after as an environmental consultant. All this was at a time when there was little emphasis or expertise in the area. He set up his own company Enviroplan Services Limited and subsequently worked as a lead consultant and project manager for many EIS projects.

He was a member of Environmental Due Diligence and the World Bank Environmental Evaluation teams in Mongolia and also Director of Regional Environmental Assessment Project for the World Bank in Mongolia. Bill was the co-director of research projects on the rehabilitation of red mud at Aughinish Alumina Ltd in Co. Limerick. He also worked in the U.K., Spain, U.S.A., Canada, Ghana, and Libya.

He was a member and chair of numerous public bodies and NGOs which illustrates his versatility:

- Chairman of the Environment Policy Committee of IBEC
- Member UNICE Working Group on Environmental Auditing
- Member Environmental Standards Consultative Committee, National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI)
- Curriculum Assessor for the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA)
- Member Northern Ireland Government Water Resources Committee
- Member Northern Ireland Tourist Board Task Force on development of Natural Resources
- Member Irish Government Wildlife Advisory Council
- Chairman Irish Wildlife Trust

In his early days in forestry, Bill was an enthusiastic member of the Society of Irish Foresters and contributed to several important field days. Bill was a larger than life character and made friends everywhere he went. He loved social occasions and in 1960, to celebrate 50 years of the Forest Service, he was asked to organise a Golden Jubilee Dinner Dance which was a great success.

Bill was a genuine Irishman and respected all traditions on this island. He has been a loyal friend of mine since October 1949 when a lifelong friendship began. Bill was a very happy man with an angelic smile which helped diffuse many awkward

situations. It also enabled him to say things to people who in the normal course would be shocked, but were able to accept it from Bill. Had he not pursued a career in forestry and environmental science he would have made a perfect career diplomat!

Bill was predeceased by his brother James. To his wife Helena, his daughter Sarah and sons Gerard and John, daughters-in-law Bela and Lucy, grandchildren Evie, Imogen, William and Naiyara, we offer our sincere sympathy.

*May Bill rest in peace.*

Neil Murray