



William Hayden McIlroy Jr.

NOV 22, 1939 - APR 19, 2026



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William Hayden McIlroy, Jr. passed away on April 19, 2026, in his hometown of Fayetteville, Arkansas, having shared the previous day surrounded by the love of his entire family. He was born November 22, 1939, in Fayetteville, the only child of William Hayden McIlroy, Sr. and Corin Kays McIlroy, and into a founding family of the Fayetteville community.

Hayden was preceded in death by his parents and his first grandchild, Spencer McIlroy Hawkins. He is survived by his beloved wife of 54 years, Mary Joe; daughters Melissa McIlroy Hawkins (Drake) of Little Rock, Melinda McIlroy of Fayetteville and Michelle Nicole McIlroy of Dallas; grandchildren Anne-Elise Hawkins Parker (Brad) of Bella Vista and Walker Kays Hawkins (Asia) of Little Rock; and great-grandchildren Faye McCollum Parker, McIlroy “Mac” Hawkins Parker, John Bradley Parker and Adelaide Spencer Hawkins.

The University of Arkansas was founded on the McIlroy family farm in 1871, and Old Main soon became an important landmark in the city of Fayetteville. Hayden was raised in the family home at 201 Ozark Street which later became part of the University campus and now houses the University of Arkansas Press. During childhood, he was fortunate to establish lifelong friendships with several local boys, including Paul Berry, Dash Goff, Jimmy Hatfield, John Lewis, Jim Tatum, Billy Whitfield and Paul Young. Hayden loved a good prank, had a mischievous sense of humor, appreciated athletic pursuits, travel adventures, fast cars, dogs and meeting friends from all walks of life. He graduated from St. John’s Military Academy in Delafield, Wisconsin, in 1957, and later attended Marines Corps bootcamp in San Diego with several Fayetteville buddies.

Hayden attended the University of Arkansas where he was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity and graduated with a business degree. In 1961, his father passed away and Hayden began his professional career with the family bank, McIlroy Bank & Trust,



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the oldest bank in Arkansas. While learning the banking business, he also welcomed his first two daughters, Misty and Melinda. He carried a lot on such young shoulders but continued the family's legacy of commitment to the City of Fayetteville, the University of Arkansas and St. Paul's Episcopal Church which bears his grandfather's name on its 1872 cornerstone.

Hayden's childhood friend, Dash, introduced him to his future wife, Mary Joe, in her hometown of Dallas. They were married on April 14, 1972, at St. Paul's, established a home on Mount Sequoyah in Fayetteville and welcomed daughter, Michelle, several years later. During those same years, construction of a new McIlroy Bank building was completed, Hayden electing to keep it on the Fayetteville Square instead of moving North of the town center as many businesses were. Thus began the revitalization of the Square. Along with good friend and fellow banker, John Lewis, Hayden and Mary Joe were instrumental in the landscape design, development and installation of flower beds around the Old Post Office which continue to provide enjoyment to the community today. The couple was also involved in leadership and fundraising efforts to establish The New School.

Hayden's passions were travel and adventure. He travelled the world and especially enjoyed planning romantic trips for Mary Joe that included fine hotels, great food and, of course, shopping. He loved a great golf course, deep sea diving, fishing in the Caribbean with close friend, Don Tyson, snow-skiing in Colorado and was usually up for any dare, including skydiving. He planned numerous adventures for his family throughout the years. Early family road trips were usually cross-country. Many a time, refusing to ask for directions and on the verge of an empty gas tank, with his daughters in tears, Hayden would exclaim, "Have no fear, Daddy Dog is here!" Thus began his nickname, Daddy Dog - later shortened to D Dog - which his daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren continued to call him until his last day. For his 75th birthday, his nickname was forever memorialized with an original song recorded by Fayetteville folk duo, STILL ON THE HILL titled, Go Dog Daddy.

His nickname was appropriate for two reasons – first was his love of dogs and second was his love of nicknames. His daughters became Bird, Buckle and Beeze and many of his friends were given nicknames, as well. Secondly, as much as Hayden loved



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people, he loved dogs almost as much. At no point in his life was he without a canine companion. He recently named 14 dogs that had enriched his life.

In 1986, after the sale of McIlroy Bank & Trust, Hayden, Mary Joe and Michelle moved to Dallas where they settled in Highland Park. Hayden focused on real estate and other investment opportunities and was fortunate to establish strong bonds in a new city. He was a member of Brook Hollow Golf Club and cherished his golfing adventures with the Flying A's whom he had such a camaraderie. Those still with us today include Norm Green, Bill Hayner, John Tolleson, and Terry Worrell. The joy of their friendship will reach the heavens.

During his years in Dallas, Hayden kept close ties to Arkansas and refurbished the old McIlroy Building on the Fayetteville Square establishing a loft apartment with retail space below. The McIlroy Loft became a frequent place to entertain friends, host parties, receptions and fundraisers and celebrate the holidays with family. A Razorback fan to the end, Hayden obtained one of the original skyboxes in the 80s at Razorback Stadium and continued to attend games through this last season.

Hayden served on the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission, Arkansas Bankers Commission, Northwest Arkansas Film Commission, Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce, State Chamber of Commerce, the Fayetteville Youth Center and numerous fundraising and leadership roles with the University of Arkansas. In 2005, he and Mary Joe established the McIlroy Family Distinguished Visiting Professorship for Visual and Performing Arts and in 2019, Hayden was recognized by the Arkansas Alumni Association with a Citation of Distinguished Alumni award. He proudly served on the Valhi, Inc. Board of Directors until his death. His achievements and service to the community are noteworthy. Just as important were his friendships and acts of kindness.

Hayden and Mary Joe returned to Fayetteville in 2021 where he spent his final years. He enjoyed his Wednesday night Sewing Circle and living near the Fayetteville Country Club where he had served two consecutive terms as president in the 1960s. He often recounted hilarious stories from his 65 years of club membership which included many of Fayetteville's most notorious characters. A great storyteller, many of his favorite memories of life in Fayetteville were shared through interviews with



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The David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History and can be found at

[https://pryorcenter.uark.edu/interview.php?](https://pryorcenter.uark.edu/interview.php?thisProject=Arkansas%20Memories&thisProfileURL=MCILROY-William-Hayden-Jr&displayName=William%20%20Hayden%20McIlroy%20Jr.&thisInterviewee=513)

[thisProject=Arkansas%20Memories&thisProfileURL=MCILROY-William-Hayden-Jr&displayName=William%20%20Hayden%20McIlroy%20Jr.&thisInterviewee=513](https://pryorcenter.uark.edu/interview.php?thisProject=Arkansas%20Memories&thisProfileURL=MCILROY-William-Hayden-Jr&displayName=William%20%20Hayden%20McIlroy%20Jr.&thisInterviewee=513)

Hayden was a fabulous father and husband. He was determined to make it to his and Mary Joe's 54th wedding anniversary on April 14, and he did. They truly had an extraordinary life together. The family would like to thank those who have lifted Hayden up in thought and prayer, called or visited these past few months. We are especially grateful to Essie Anderson, Angela Faulkner, Margie Fox, Lowell Grisham, Archie Schaffer, and Debbie Trainor who have been such support to the family.

We find peace in knowing that Hayden will be greeted at the gates by many good friends who went before him including Jim Blair, Michael DeStefano, John Gourley, Joe Giroir, Levon Helm, John Lewis, David Pryor, Harold Simmons, Jim Tatum, Don Tyson, members of the Flying A's - Barry Andrews, Jim Hammond, J.L. Huffines and Max Williams – and, of course, Winston, his favorite dog. Stories, pranks and laughter will continue!

A final farewell to Hayden is planned for Friday, May 1, 2026, 2:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 224 N East Ave, Fayetteville, Arkansas under the direction of Moore's Chapel in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Following the funeral, a reception and celebration of his life will follow in the Parish Hall.

In honor of Hayden, memorials may be made to the University of Arkansas McIlroy Family Visiting Professorship in Performing and Visual Arts, c/o U of A Gift Administration, 481 S. Shiloh Dr, Fayetteville, AR 72704; St. Paul's Episcopal Church, P.O. Box 1190, Fayetteville, AR 72702; or any animal welfare organization.

I to the hills will lift mine eyes, from whence doth come my aid. My safety cometh from the Lord, who heaven and earth hath made. Psalm 121

Where you go, I will go. Where you lodge, I will lodge. Ruth 1:16

To place an online tribute, please visit www.bernafuneralhomes.com




Events


William Hayden McIlroy Jr.

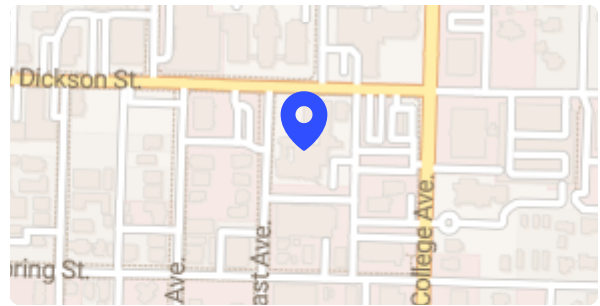
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Memorial Service

 **Friday**, May 1, 2026

 2:00 PM CT

 **St. Paul's Episcopal Church**
224 N East Ave, Fayetteville AR 72701





Tribute Wall

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Robin Hall Guadagnini posted:

It is difficult to put into words the impact that Hayden had on so many lives. To me, he was far more than a longtime friend, client, and former boss—to our family and others he was a mentor, a leader, and someone whose vision shaped not only the banking community, but the lives of the people fortunate enough to know him. Hayden had a rare gift for seeing possibilities where others saw obstacles. He was a true visionary in banking, always looking ahead and finding ways to strengthen not only the financial future of individuals and businesses, but the heart of the entire community. As a boss, Hayden led with wisdom, fairness, and quiet strength. He inspired confidence and loyalty, not by demanding it, but by earning it through integrity and genuine care. As a friend, He offered kindness, encouragement, and unwavering support. As a client, He placed trust where trust mattered most, and that loyalty meant more than words can express. Hayden believed in community first. He understood that true success was measured not only by professional achievements, but by the difference made in the lives of others. His legacy will live on in the institutions he helped build, the people he mentored, and the countless lives he touched. I, and we, will always be grateful for the privilege of knowing Hayden. Our deepest sympathies, The Bob E Hall Family, Robin (Hall) & Robert Guadagnini, Teddy Hall, and Bob & Coleen Hall (deceased)

April 24 at 12:11 PM



Memories only last if you share them

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



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