

BRUCE H. WILLIAMS

Bruce H. Williams, age 86 of New Port Richey, Florida, died on Saturday, February 9, at his home after a brief illness. Born February 18, 1932, Williams grew up in East Orange, New Jersey and went on to become one of the country's top radio talk show hosts. For more than 29 years the legendary Williams started his nationally syndicated show by slipping behind the microphone and saying, "Welcome my friends-welcome to my world."

Spanning a career that lasted more than three decades, Bruce Williams created a loyal listenership hundreds of thousands of people strong with his informative and entertaining program, delivered in his signature deep, warm, welcoming voice.

But, one of the most unusual and remarkable facts surrounding Williams' Hall of Fame radio career is that it did not begin until he was well into his forties.

Blessed with an innate sense of business, at age 11, he devised a way to address one of the many shortages common at the end of World War II by melting down lead pipes and casting them into toy soldiers. Eyes wide open, he was off and running, pursuing every avenue where he believed a profit could be made.

After serving in the Air Force during the Korean conflict and graduating from Newark State College (now Kean University), he opened a pre-school named after his children. He spent time driving an ice cream truck in Newark, New Jersey. He was also a taxi driver and drove a beer truck. For seventy years of his life, he spent the holiday season selling Christmas trees.

On the white-collar side, Williams sold insurance, owned a flower shop, a car rental agency, a barber shop and he owned and operated several nightclubs.

There was even a whirlwind tour into the world of politics where the Honorable Bruce H. Williams was elected to the Franklin, New Jersey Township Council, as well as serving terms as Deputy Mayor and Mayor between 1967 and 1975.

It was the weight and wealth of these life experiences that Williams relied on throughout his accomplished radio career and gave depth to his on-air persona.

His amazing career began in 1975 at WCTC 1450 Talk Radio, The Voice of Central New Jersey, where Williams hosted a show called *At Your Service*.

After some time, his success took him to WMCA in the Big Apple and his momentum and audience continued to build. Williams growing popularity brought him to the attention of radio executives at NBC who were searching for a host of

a national nightly advice-oriented talk show. After a long selection process, Williams was chosen and his program launched in November of 1981. It was from this platform, his reputation as a broadcaster blossomed.

That blossom was almost nipped a year later, when a plane he was piloting crashed into some trees during an aborted landing attempt. Critically injured and nearly dead when he arrived at the Medical Center of Princeton, Williams rallied and was back on the air broadcasting again from his hospital room, just four weeks after the accident.

Over the next three decades, Williams' voice was heard coast-to-coast as he became one of the most listened to talk show hosts in radio history.

The industry recognized Williams' accomplishments in 1999 when he was inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame in Chicago. Trade-Industry Publication *Talkers Magazine* also honored Williams in 2002 by including him at Number Six in their list of greatest radio talk show hosts.

Not to be omitted from Williams' long list of accomplishments is the fact that he authored six financial and real estate advice books as well as a syndicated advice column called *Smart Money*.

Bruce H. Williams was 81 years old when he hung up his head phones for the final time in 2013, signing off as he always did by saying, "Keep in touch."

Bruce is survived by his loving wife of more than twenty years, Susan. Children Matthew, Mark (Michelle), Robbins, Kelly and Michael (Kristie), grandchildren Brendan, Thomas, Lane, Hooker, Piper, Anders and Everett as well as many lifelong friends and business associates, most especially Steve Belly. Bruce is preceded in death by his parents Florence E. and Harold R. Williams; his brother Walter; his first wife Ruthann; and grandson Mustang.

The family will receive guests on Saturday, February 16, 2019 from 9am until 11am at Gleason Funeral Home, 1360 Hamilton St., Somerset, NJ, 08873 (732-545-0700). The Funeral Service will take place at 11am. Graveside Services will follow immediately at Elm Ridge Cemetery in North Brunswick.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Pasco County Florida Animal Shelter at www.FPCAS.org or K9 Partners for Patriots at www.K9partnersforpatriots.com.