



William Pennington Vann

September 9, 1935 - September 3, 2022

Dr. William Pennington, "Penny," Vann died Saturday, September 3, 2022, at the age of 86. His wife, Joy, his children, several grandchildren, and other close family members were with him as he passed.

Penny was born September 9, 1935, in Belton, Texas, to William Harvey and Osee Maedgen Vann. He was Valedictorian and President of his Senior Class at Belton High School, as well as All-District Quarterback. He attended Columbia University, earning Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Civil Engineering. He then earned a PhD. in Civil Engineering from Rice University.

Dr. Vann taught at Rice for 6 years before joining the faculty of Civil Engineering at Texas Tech. He taught at Tech for 32 years, with more than 40 years of design, research, and consulting experience focused primarily on structural engineering. He served as advisor to Chi Epsilon (National C.E. Honorary Society) for 30 years. He was a member, often as chair, of more than 40 university committees. He authored approximately 40 technical publications in civil engineering. He developed courses still in use by Texas Tech, including "Principles of Design," "Team Design," and "Ethics in Engineering," among others.

Dr. Vann was a member and president of the American Society of Civil Engineers, High Plains Branch. He was a member and president of the Texas

Society of Professional Engineers, South Plains Chapter. He consulted with many organizations, primarily regarding structural responses to earthquake, wind, and blast effects. He worked at Patrick Airforce Base, Cape Canaveral, conducting classified risk analysis associated with Space Shuttle Launches.

Penny was a founding director of Lubbock Habitat for Humanity. He served over 4 decades on its Board of Directors as president, vice president, and secretary. He was a member of Habitat's Regional Board, and served as chairman of the SW Regional Committee overseeing Texas and Oklahoma. He served terms as Director of Lubbock Habitat for Humanity, and for the Lower Rio Grande Valley, declining a salary with both organizations.

Penny was a man of great Christian faith, serving as a deacon for over 50 years; first with South Main Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, and then Second Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas. He taught Sunday School and sang in the choir for many years. He was also a member of the Board of Trustees for Mary-Hardin Baylor University, Belton, Texas.

Penny served in the U.S. Army National Reserve, being called to active duty in 1960 and 1961-62. He served on the South Plains Honor Flight for Veterans Committee, twice accompanying groups to Washington, D.C., as a Transportation Captain. He coached Little League Baseball and youth Basketball. After retiring, he became a member of the American Red Cross Volunteer Emergency Response Team.

Dr. Vann was honored many times for excellence in teaching and for outstanding research publications. He and his wife received a J.C. Penny Award for Community Service. He was honored with Engineer of the Year Awards from both the Texas Society of Professional Engineers and the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Penny played the guitar, clarinet, ukulele, and banjo. He loved to sing to his wife and children. He was passionate about sports, puzzles, puns, and games of all kinds. He never used profanity, but would roar at a television, "That's a terrible call!" at wrong-minded referees or umpires (those against Texas Tech). Even during the last week of his life, with advanced Parkinson's having led to severe memory issues, he enjoyed the daily crossword and sudoku.

Although Dr. Vann was an amazing servant to society, "Penny" is most remembered for his incredible compassion, his intelligence, his dignity, his humor, and his innate humility. His passing is deeply mourned by his family and many friends.

He is survived by his wife, Joy Vann; his children, Roderick Vann and Nimi Finnigan, Meredith Vann Sipes and Jeff Sipes, and Paul Vann and Kim Vann; his grandchildren, Taylor Vann Carter, Kodey Vann, John Sipes, David Sipes, Rebecca Vann, Teagen Vann, Rachel Sipes, Charlie Sipes, Sienna Vann, Anaya Vann, and Aedric Vann; and his great-granddaughter, Ellis Carter.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests you send donations to Habitat for Humanity, 3630 50th St. Lubbock, TX 79413.

Cemetery Details

City of Lubbock Cemetery

2011 E 31st Street
Lubbock, TX 79404

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 11. 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM.

Sanders Funeral Home

Memorial Service

SEP 12. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM.

Second Baptist Church

Tribute Wall

RN

“ I just learned of Penny until just now. I loved next door to him for years. Our families were very close. He visited me in CA. I would like to know what became of his siblings: Richard and Harriet. He was as nice a guy as you could know. As I remember, he was once the youngest member ever of the faculty at Rice.

Richard Nash - February 21, 2024 at 08:06 PM

DG

“ We know how wonderful and thoughtful Penny was even in High School. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. May God be with you and help you through this sad time. Doris (Osborn) and Jack T. Gibson

Doris and Jack Gibson - September 12, 2022 at 09:04 PM

FB

“ From your S&B Family: Brook Brookshire purchased the Strength & Solace Spray for the family of William Pennington Vann.



From your S&B Family: Brook Brookshire - September 12, 2022 at 09:23 AM

MM

“ Penny will long be remembered for his kindness and laughter. He had a wonderful sense of humor and taught us all to enjoy Pogo in the funnies.
Sympathy to all the family.
Mary Lou & Max Marks

Max & Mary lou Marks - September 11, 2022 at 07:21 PM



“ *Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of William Pennington Vann.*



September 11, 2022 at 12:30 AM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of William Pennington Vann.*



September 10, 2022 at 10:00 PM



“ *Penny was "Mr. Habitat" for me. His witness, commitment, faithfulness and generosity were inspiring. My heart grieves for you, Joy, and your family. May God bring you comfort through the happy memories and know that your beloved Penny was esteemed and admired immensely. With love.*
Anne Cochran

Anne Cochran - September 10, 2022 at 05:47 PM

VW

“Penny Vann and I went through the Belton public schools in the same cohort and shared many experiences. His natural leadership abilities were evident at an early age, and I often relied on his guidance. His scholastic achievement set an example for his classmates to follow but which none could match. We enjoyed many Scouting activities together, especially campouts. Penny had a strong competitive spirit and excelled at any sport that sparked his interest. Although he could be a formidable adversary, he was also fiercely defensive of fairness in all things. We also grew up, albeit in separate denominations, under the influence of a common protestant faith in the reformed tradition, the tenets of which have shaped the remainder of our lives.

Our paths diverged when we left Belton High School for college, but we usually re-connected when both of us worked at summer jobs in Belton. We also got together occasionally during graduate training when he was in Houston and I was in Galveston. I felt deeply honored to be asked to usher at his wedding. Because our academic lives kept us in Texas, we managed to stay connected through visits in each others' homes, spaced at odd intervals when he attended professional meetings in San Antonio or my academic responsibilities took me to Lubbock. I always learned something new and interesting from these meetings about things he and his students were doing, such as building and racing concrete canoes or measuring stress resistance of bridge spans of various design. During our move to Colorado after my retirement, Dorothy and I were invited to stay overnight with the Vanns, who graciously accommodated our ~ four-hour tardy arrival! And on our occasional trips to and from Texas we have often stopped in Lubbock for a brief visit.

Penny is a dear friend who has had an outsized influence on my life. His passing from this life has left a deficit that cannot be re-filled. Yet I know that my grief pales beyond description in comparison to that of Penny's family members. I also am aware that consoling words can at best offer only temporary relief from the psychic trauma you have endured during this past week. My hope is that

your faith will sustain you through these difficult days and in due time facilitate the return of your lives to some, although likely diminished, degree of normalcy. I regret that previous commitment to treatment of my own serious health issues will make it impossible for me to attend in person the celebration of Penny's life on Monday, but I will be there in spirit.

*With profound condolence,
Vick Williams (and Dorothy)*

Vick Williams - September 09, 2022 at 11:51 PM

BT

“ *I met Penny and Joy when Barbara and I were members of South Main Baptist in Houston with them. His son Rod and our son Paul were in the nursery together. A number of years later when I came to teach at Tech, Penny was a valuable friend and encourager. We were both members of the Breadbreakers, a weekly Christian fellowship group. From this fellowship, Penny was a significant help as I transitioned from a professional experience to the academic world. Penny was a genuine Jesus follower.*

Ben Trotter

Ben Trotter - September 09, 2022 at 08:56 AM