

Bill F.



Bill was born in Seguin, Texas March 3rd 1934. He moved to Houston when he was 25 years old, where he met his wife Joann. They have been married for 47 years. He has a son who lives in Pasadena, Texas, a daughter who lives in Fort Worth, Texas, and four grandchildren. Bill graduated from The University of Texas in 1957 with a Bachelor's degree in business administration. He spent the vast majority of his career working in the insurance industry and retired a couple of years ago. He enjoys spending time with family and friends in his spare time. He is also an active member of St. Francis Catholic Church, the Alzheimer Association, and the Lions Club.

Objective 1: What was happening in your life that prompted you to seek a diagnosis of Alzheimer's?

Well, I could see some change. Actually, it was discovered by Dr. William Fleming, who's my Urologist, during just a regular visit. I think he ran a series of tests and discovered I was in the early stages of Alzheimer's. This was about three or four years ago. So, I just decided while it's in the early stages lets do something about it, as much as we can, before it gets any worse. You know.

So you went in for a routine visit and he did testing?

Yea, Dr. Fleming, I usually see him about twice a year. He just ran a battery of tests and somewhere he discovered I was in the early stages of Alzheimer's. But as far as I know, my wife might disagree; I was totally unaware of it.

Please explain whether there was one significant? Or were there a series of things you experienced?

No, as far as I know it was three or four years ago. As far as I know, it was just a regular visit.

How many visits to the doctor did it take before the diagnosis was made?

I don't really know. I had been seeing Dr. Fleming for I think two to three years prior to that. I would say two to three years. Dr. Fleming was a referral from my primary care physician. I think I've been seeing Dr. Fleming five or six years. I think after about three years he said I was in the early stage of Alzheimer's. This was three or so years ago. I don't know the exact time, but it's probably in a year or so of being correct.

Were you aware of any immediate changes at home or with your family once you received your diagnosis?

No, I think my memory had slipped some. I've always been a tad clutsy. I've noticed I've gotten more careless and clutsy. I think at times I'm a pretty easy going person. I think that at times I have gotten more irritable, that smaller things were irritating me that hadn't been noticeable before that.

Objective 2: When you first learned your diagnosis of early memory loss (Alzheimer's disease), what was your immediate reaction?

Well, I didn't know what to expect and of course it was a certain amount of sadness and anxiety of not knowing and uncertainty, not knowing what the future would hold. It was somewhat of a blow. I married kind of late in life. Well, I was really 30 when I got married. I would like to have my full faculties when Joann and I celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary, which is about 3 and half years off. I would also like to see an interesting diversification of grandkids. There are four of them. They are 15, 19, 5, and 2. It's a wide variety. I would like to see my 19 year old granddaughter graduate from college and possibly get married, if she chooses to do so. My grandson is a pretty good athlete and has also become a pretty good student. I'd like to at least see him finish high school and see where he goes to college. I would also like to see him play some sports in high school, which he plans to do. I just think, especially since I don't have to work and there's not a lot of pressures, I'm really looking forward to the next five years or ten years and I hope that the Alzheimer's doesn't put a disruption on it or prevent me from doing so. I guess that would be pretty accurate.

Objective 3: Can you tell me how your family behaved when they learned about your diagnosis?

I think it was favorable. I have noticed a very favorable change in Joann, my wife. She has worked very hard in being a caregiver and being very aware of the things. My son who's actually hearing impaired and daughter have been very sympathetic and very supportive. My friends in my home town of Seguin say there is nothing wrong with me. They comment that well you have always been a bit loosey goosy. I haven't noticed any significant change, which makes it kind of interesting, because one of the friends is a pharmacist and the other one is a lawyer. I think it makes it even more interesting. Actually, I have had people at church or friends say that they haven't noticed a significant difference. I think my family has.

Did you feel they treated you any differently?

I think they have treated me better. If it's a fake, I think I will just keep it up.

How soon after your diagnosis did you begin to tell your friends?

Different times. Most of the friends were closer friends I think, so within the first two or three months. I would say somewhere along there.

Objective 4: Do you think it was helpful to learn about your diagnosis early?

Absolutely, oh yes, there's an old saying an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. To me it's like anything else the sooner you find out about it and take the steps to correct it, whether you do or not, the better. The majority of the cases, the better off, the better the chances of either prolonging it or conquering it.

Can you describe how finding out about your disease early has helped you?

I think I have been more conscious. I have been more conscious of my clumsiness. Sometimes this is true and sometimes it isn't. I think I've been more conscious and more careful of what I say and how I act and react.

In two or three sentences, is there one other thing about you that you would like the audience to know?

I've always been active. I've led a pretty good life. I have a nice family