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Bill Graham with Risi, his wife of over four decades.



The Marshall Islands

\$1 on Majuro



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Farewell to the nuclear champion

GIFF JOHNSON

Bill Graham, an American who spent over three decades of his life fighting for nuclear weapons testing justice for Marshall Islanders, died last week on the 64th anniversary of the Bravo hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll.

The significance of this day in Marshall Islands history — when thousands of islanders, Americans and Japanese were irradiated with Bravo test fallout, hundreds of islanders were displaced from their home islands, and the US government launched a

cover up of Bravo's consequences that continues to this day — would dominate Bill's life from his 21 years as the Public Advocate at the Nuclear Claims Tribunal to his appointment, late last year, as a commissioner on the RMI's recently established National

Nuclear Commission.

Bill, who died a week short of his 72nd birthday, didn't just work on "nuclear issues." He was an institution in a nation with a tendency to lose documents and an inability to maintain consistency from

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Nitijela bid bomb

Settlement fails, case goes to court

Attorney David Strauss filed suit in the High Court late last month against the RMI government accusing the Ministry of Finance, the Attorney General's office, Nitijela and the RMI Bid Committee with defrauding Majuro Computer Services over a contract for a public address system in Nitijela.

The suit is seeking over \$700,000 in general and punitive damages from the RMI national government. Strauss had filed for MCS an administrative complaint early last year on the bid contract that was won by TSL with a bid that was \$175,000 more than MCS'.

"The Attorney General has been trying to settle this case since June, but Cabinet has not responded," said Strauss. The complaint was originally signed on November 22, but was not filed last year to give the Attorney General additional time to get the Cabinet to approve the proposed settlement, he said.

When the settlement fizzled, Strauss filed on February 23.

The suit names key players in the RMI Bid Committee and officials involved in this particular bid, including: Chief Procurement Officer Bruce Loeak, Speaker Kenneth Kedi, Clerk Morean Watak, Assistant Attorney General Cutty Wase, Nitijela staff Fuisega Sua-lau, Augusty Kessibuki, Finance Secretary May Bing, Assistant Attorney General Claire Loeak, Project Management Unit's Melvin Dacillo, Public Works Secretary Catalino Kijiner, Deputy Attorney General Johnathen Kawakami, Finance Minister Brenson Wase, and Finance staff Adele Kinso.

"The defendants did not act in good faith in the negotiation, performance, or administration of (the request for proposals) as required by Section 105 of the Procurement Code,"

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Photo: Hilary Hosia

Not to be missed!

Review of the hot musical: P13

\$19m Ebeye project stalled

A standoff between the RMI Combined Utilities Board and the Asian Development Bank has put the \$19 million Ebeye water and sewer project in danger of having its funding cut off.

Jack Chong Gum, CEO of RMI's Combined Utilities, told ADB last month that the board has decided to cancel the bid award and re-advertise and re-

bid Ebeye's largest construction project. But ADB fired back that it does not agree with the plan to re-bid the contract award. "Should the Combined Utilities Board proceed with cancellation of the bidding, ADB may not finance any works included in the scope" of the Ebeye water and sewer project, said James Lynch, Deputy Director General of

ADB's Pacific Department. ADB is the lead donor in this project that is also backed by the United States and Australia. Other donors are expected to follow ADB's lead since it is coordinating the project for Ebeye.

RMI Combined Utilities wants to re-bid both the water and sewer project and the electrical network upgrade and

power plant monitoring system project for KAJUR.

"Recent infrastructure projects in the RMI have proven that the project development approach for these two projects will result in high cost, project construction delays, compromised quality and liability risk for the RMI," said Chong Gum. "If the consultant

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The people's advocate

Remembering Bill Graham's life in the Marshalls and his fight for nuclear weapons testing justice

From page 1

one decade to the next. "Bill is one of those guys you need to be only a phone call away," said Jack Niedenthal, who wrote "For the Good of Mankind," a book about the Bikinians. With Bill's passing, "an entire encyclopedia has gone into the ground."

But while Bill became the go-to guy on anything nuclear, this issue did not define him until the late 1980s. And even as he became the encyclopedia of the nuclear weapons testing legacy in the Marshall Islands, he had time for family, college and NFL football, and community volunteering.

He arrived in Majuro in 1969 as a newly minted Peace Corps Volunteer. Bill met Risi Langrine in 1971 and they married the following year. Risi and Bill became a fixture and, were it not

'Bill is one of those guys you need to be only a phone call away.' With Bill's passing 'an entire encyclopedia has gone into the ground.' — Jack Niedenthal

for his death in Honolulu last week following heart surgery, they would have soon celebrated their 50th anniversary.

His teaching experience as a PCV here nearly 50 years ago led him to a significant career in education in the late Trust Territory and early independence era of RMI. Still, one couldn't pigeon hole Bill.

While developing teaching materials for public schools with a mixed team of Americans and Marshallese at the now-defunct CLT (Curriculum Learning Training) program located at Rita Elementary School, he became a

significant force in the Marshalls Billfish Club. He was a fixture on the dock at regular fishing tournaments and as an emcee at billfish banquets. As club secretary, he oversaw exactness of competition results and the club's annual tournament booklets, adding substance to the anglers' catches that disappeared quickly as meals or became stories that soon took on the ephemeral of tall tales. The MBC tourney books confirmed who reeled in the big ones, providing the only written history of the fishermen's exploits.

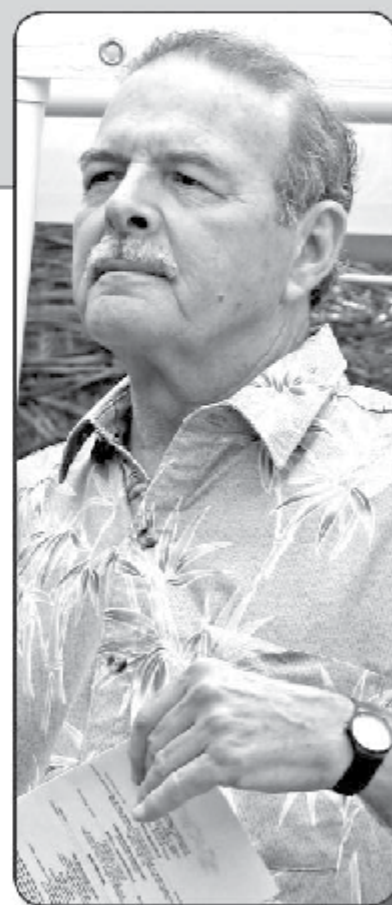
The arrival in Majuro in 1982 of William F. Roberts, engineer

extraordinaire from Liverpool and soon to be one of Majuro's most avid fishermen, produced a dilemma for the fishing brotherhood: Now they were faced with having two "Bills." But the problem was quickly solved: Roberts became La-Billy to Graham's La-Bill.

Bill joined other MBC fishermen, including Tony deBrum, Wally Milne, Rick Bush and Victor Milne at the Hawaii International Billfish Tournament in Kona in 1986, and reeled in the first marlin of the tourney for Team Marshalls, a 160-point tag and release.

Bill was also an avid bridge player and his circle included other American former-PCVs who stayed once their Peace Corps stints expired.

His fluency in the Marshallese language gave him entry



Bill at his son, Ben and Monique's wedding in July 2007.
Photo: Karen Earnshaw.

Continued page 6

Namdrik Black Pearls *Annual Sale*

The Namdrik Community proudly announces a display and sale of their most recent harvest.

Pearls will be on display for sale at the MIR Lomalo Room

Dates: Friday, March 16 from 10 am to 6 pm

Saturday, March 17 from 10 am to 4 pm

Come and select from a beautiful range of loose pearls, pendants, rings and necklaces.

Call 456-7447 with inquiries.

Marshallese owned and operated ~ Be Marshallese, Buy Marshallese



Fishing, football, and the

From page 5

into Marshallese life enjoyed by few Americans. His Marshallese language ability was such that a listener tuning into a V7AB broadcast of a Nitijela public hearing where Bill was providing testimony would often mistake Bill's polished delivery of Kajin Aelon Kein for that of a native-born speaker.

More recently, and despite the burden of carrying the country's nuclear legacy on his shoulders, Bill would without fail each week email to a handful of friends a summary and schedule of the upcoming weekend's American college football games, replete with insightful commentary, channels, times of broadcast, links to news

Trudy Huskamp Peterson, archival consultant who worked with the Nuclear Claims Tribunal to preserve the records of the Nuclear Claims Tribunal:

The Republic of the Marshall Islands should reinvigorate its National Archives and hold in it the original records of the Tribunal, renaming it the National Archives and Graham Nuclear Documentation Center. What could be a more fitting tribute to this devoted, determined man?

stories for those interested to pursue team rivalries further, and what channels on NTA's intermittent MHTV service might be available to those needing their weekly 10-hour dose of Saturday

college football.

It was, however, the Nuclear Claims Tribunal where Bill came into his own. The Public Advocate's office, which he directed, was the entry point to the Tribu-

Bunny McDiarmid, Interim Program Director of Greenpeace International:

It was a real pleasure for Greenpeace to work with someone like Bill on the project to digitize the Tribunal's records. Bill knew those records belonged to the Marshallese, was their story, their history and there was a strong sense that justice was being served by keeping those records in the hands of the Marshallese.

nal for any resident or atoll community seeking compensation for health or environmental damage from the nuclear weapons testing program, which took place between 1946 and 1958. When he

took up his post in the late 1980s, the Tribunal was in the early stage of its own organization and beginning work that would lead to the first provision of compensation to Marshall Islanders on an annual basis pursuant to the Compact of Free Association's Section 177.

As the Public Advocate, Bill personally met many of the thousands of Marshallese who filed personal injury claims, and worked to assist them through the claims process. As Bikini, Enewetak, Rongelap and Utrik geared to file land damage claims for their atolls, Bill was asked to represent Rongelap. He had felt criticism for the fact that he wasn't a lawyer while most of the senior staff at the Tribunal



Public Meeting

Public Satisfaction with Court Services

The High Court of RMI is committed to improving its services and the administration of justice for the people of the Marshall Islands.

A public meeting to discuss satisfaction with court services and administration will be held at the Majuro Courthouse (Courtroom A) on: Wednesday, 14 March, 2018, from 9:00 am until 5:00pm. The purpose of this meeting is to provide court-users, members of the public, the bar, and any interested community groups with an opportunity to share their experience and to express their satisfaction, concerns, and suggestions.

Refreshments will be provided.

This meeting will be hosted by the High Court of RMI and the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative and funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



This Initiative is supported by the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative which is funded by the New Zealand Government and implemented by the Federal Court of Australia



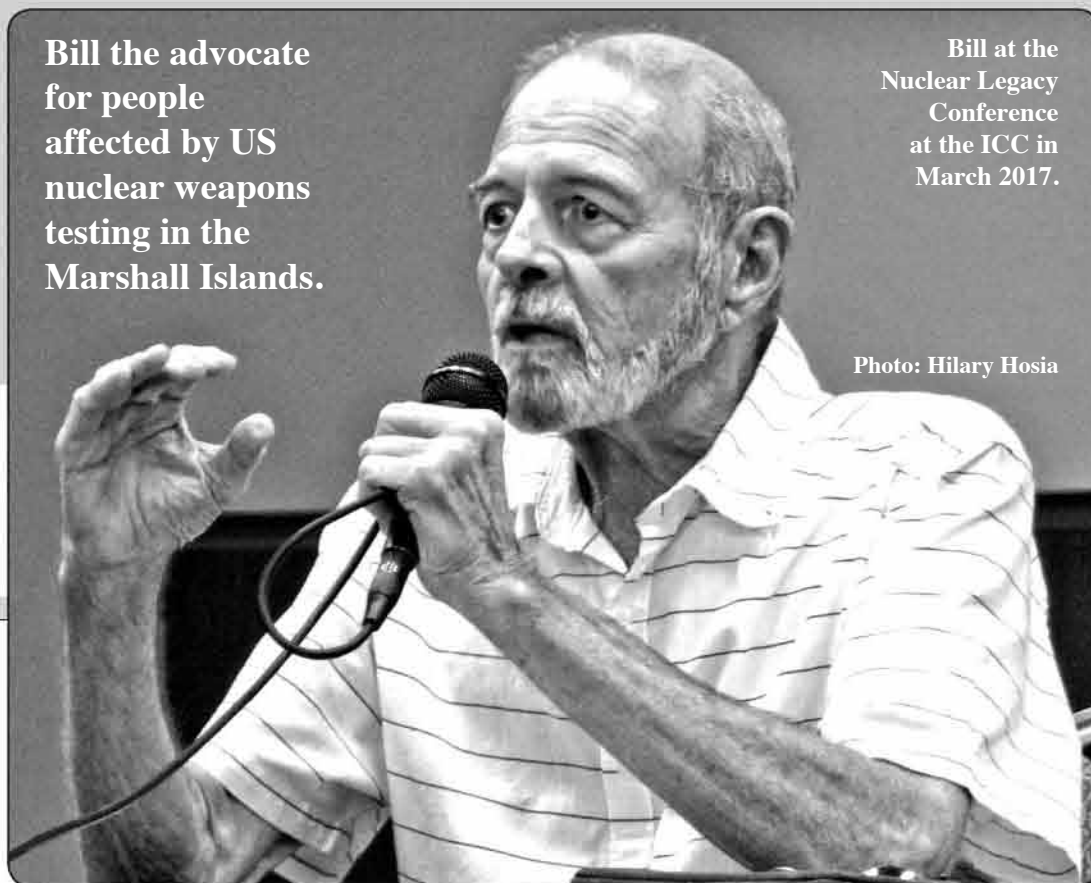
From far left: Bill the emcee at the 2003 All Mike. Bill the MBC committee member at the 2003 July banquet. Bill the buddy with Richard Creagan in 2011. Bill the interviewee with a Swedish journalist in January. Bill the Commissioner in January...



Bill the advocate for people affected by US nuclear weapons testing in the Marshall Islands.

Bill at the Nuclear Legacy Conference at the ICC in March 2017.

Photo: Hilary Hosia



Tribunal

were and other islands were represented by attorneys. It simply meant he worked harder to ensure he didn't miss a beat. Rongelap won the biggest award of the "four atolls" — over \$1 billion — which speaks to the quality of the Public Advocate's representation.

He used his fully resourced office at the Tribunal to engage world-leading physicists, medical doctors and social scientists to advise claimants, review decades old Brookhaven National Laboratory and Atomic Energy Commission studies, and recalculate dose assessments made by US government scientists in the 1950s. This work produced some of the best independent scientific, social and health analysis generated for the benefit of Marshall Islanders to better understand their exposures and pointed out numerous errors and omissions in the AEC radiation studies of Marshallese. "Human Radiation Experiments and the Unanswered Question of the 'Accidental' Nature of Bravo" was one of many Tribunal-supported research papers that broke new ground by shedding light on US weapons testing and the radiation studies of human beings.

When the Clinton Administration opened up secret records on the US nuclear weapons testing program beginning in 1994, the State Department began delivering studies, memos, and reports by the thousand to the RMI government. Bill devoured these documents. Tedious as most documents were, in every few thousand there was a gem.

One such gem was the January 1955 AEC report — "Radioactive Debris from Operation Castle, Islands of the Mid-Pacific" — that blew away the US government-created myth that only four atolls were contaminated by nuclear test fallout. This listed two dozen islands and atolls in the Marshalls, from Rongelap to Ebon, that received various levels of fallout not alone from Bravo, but from all six of the hydrogen bomb tests in the 1954 testing series at Bikini. Bill came to believe that this report, because it undermined US government claims maintained since 1954 that only four

Holly Barker, Professor, University of Washington:
Bill was one of the first people who came and spoke to our Peace Corps group when we arrived in 1988. In his matter-of-fact way, he communicated his deep caring for the country and people we knew little about. I will never forget Bill on the day I left. He came out to the airport. I was a wreck as I didn't even know if I would see my Marshallese family again. Bill found me bent down on the floor crying, got me to stand up, and talked to me about the ways I could stay connected to the RMI. Bill always teased me about that day, but his teasing communicated the value he ascribed to long-term commitment to issues and people, as he demonstrated through his engagement at the Tribunal. Bill set a high standard and asked others to meet it.

atolls were exposed, was declassified by mistake.

After beginning annual compensation payments in 1991, the Tribunal exhausted its compensation funding and halted these payments in 2006. As the Tribunal over the next several years went into "caretaker" status, Bill ended his role as Public Advocate after 21 years. But he remained heavily engaged in the Tribunal and by 2010 was beating the bushes for funding to digitize the Tribunal's records. Indeed, the multi-year, multi-donor supported digitizing project was Bill's crowning achievement for Marshall Islands nuclear victims, a legacy that makes nuclear justice possible in

the years to come.

"Access to archives empowers people to act for their rights and the rights of others," said Trudy Huskamp Peterson, an archival consultant who worked with Bill to preserve the records of the Nuclear Claims Tribunal. "Bill Graham understood this instinctively. He was determined that the records of the Nuclear Claims Tribunal should be preserved and made available for use, all while respecting the rights to privacy of persons whose claims are part of the record. As a packrat himself, Bill held onto both vital records of the claims and minute details of the way the Tribunal worked. He made sure that audio and sometimes video recordings were made of Tribunal sessions, and with his own equipment and time he made copies of many of them. He wanted to write a history of the Tribunal, which sadly he never completed, but his legacy lives on in the records he saved. The history of the Marshallese people is found in the Nuclear Claims Tribunal records."

He worked as a consultant to governments of the day after leaving the employ of the Tribunal, but was never provided adequate resources by the government to step up the campaign for nuclear weapons testing justice beyond speech writing, talking points for meetings, and the occasional memo seeking release of additional secret documents from the US government.

Privately, he expressed exasperation over the lack of support and resources, but this never diminished his commitment to the work. "Bill was one of those very special people who genuinely loved his fellow human being, and who always put his own concerns aside for the benefit of helping others," said Glenn Alcalay, a Peace Corps Volunteer at Utrik Atoll from 1977-

Barbara Rose Johnston, Senior Research Scholar at the Center for Political Ecology in California, who co-authored "Consequential Damages of Nuclear War, The Rongelap Report":

Truth be told, the idea that our ornery, stubborn, persistent friend with the steel trap mind is gone is still simply beyond my understanding. Bill will continue to be a world treasure thanks to the varied legacies he has created. Not just with the nuclear matters that brought me into his orbit, but also the establishment and work to build an education system, work he continued in one way or another throughout his life. Most recently, insuring that the hard-won evidence in the Tribunal files will be an open resource for the Marshall Islands and larger world public to study.

Barbara Rose Johnston:

The news of his March 1 death — reaching me on March 1 — is one that appropriately comes on what, in my mind, will always be "Nuclear Remembrance/Nuclear Justice!" day. If ever there is a struggle that has no physical, final end it is Nuclear Justice — and in my 20 year experience Bill has been the living manifestation of this aim, with 24/7 commitment that he will share with an ever growing troop of advocates, not only champion the cause, but bring "nuclear justice" into full fruition.

78 and now Associate Professor of Anthropology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York. "Always. That was Bill Graham."

Indeed, the day before his heart surgery at Straub two weeks ago, Bill sent me a typically detailed reply to a health provider's discovery of many children born in Marshall Islands without eyeballs. Despite his impending surgery, his email was, without fail, thorough, helpful and with suggestions for follow up.

In recognition of his long-term, contributions to the Marshall Islands, he was given Marshallese citizenship by the current administration. In addition, he was named last year to the National Nuclear

Commission and was engaged with it until his death last week.

Bill's death presents a challenge to the Marshall Islands and Marshall Islanders: where is our next generation of nuclear champions who will carry the struggle for nuclear testing justice forward?

Bill is survived by his wife Risi, four children: Wanda, Ben, Randy and Jiaur, and eight grandchildren. His remains are scheduled to arrive Majuro from Honolulu this Saturday. Funeral services are expected to be held from Saturday through Monday mid-day, when his remains will be transported to the Arrak area of Majuro for burial on family property Monday afternoon.