

Biography of Bill Maness

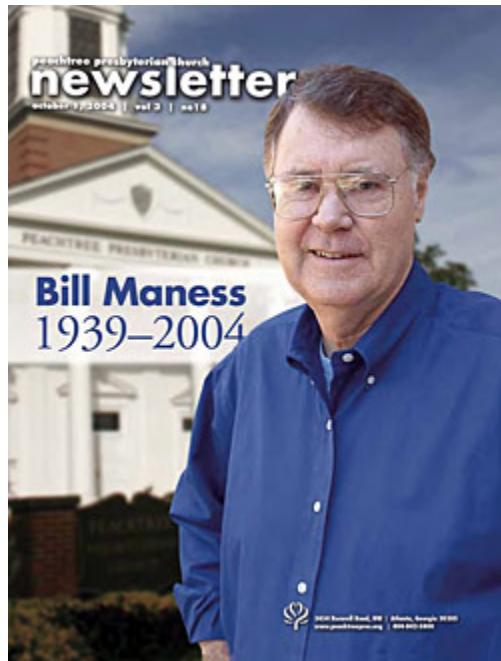
Bill Maness (William D Maness Jr) was born at Emory University, March 23, 1939, the only child of Bill and Lucy Maness. He grew up in East Atlanta, attended Mary Lynn Elementary School and Bass High School. After graduating from high school, he continued his education at GA Tech University studying for a degree in Civil Engineering. During his junior year at Tech, he felt that God had called him into the ministry. He transferred to Furman University, in Greenville, SC where he earned his BA degree. Between college and seminary, he was the assistant pastor at Trinity Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA.

Following college and an assistant pastorship, he attended Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, KY. After leaving the seminary, he moved back to Atlanta to become the Physical Fitness Director at Northside YMCA. While working for the YMCA, he created an early morning fitness program, 'Y's and Shiner's'.

This was a group of men who started running before running was the "in" thing to do, and before jogging shoes were even thought of. Because men were running down one of the well-known streets in Buckhead, in the early morning hours and while it was still dark, people living on the street became concerned and called the police. The fitness group ran in the first Peachtree Road Race with 110 participants and wondered to themselves, "*where did all these people come from.*" Today this race has 60,000 participants.

Bill went on to have a fitness program at 6:30am on WSB television. He wrote a book 'Exercise Your Heart', and was featured in numerous magazines. He created a publishing company '*Fitness News Service*' which continues today with his son, Mark Maness as CEO and his wife, Jackie as President. The news service publishes fitness and health newsletters for large corporations including, but not limited to: Harvey Watt Company Insurance for Airline Pilots; Coca Cola; Ga Pacific; Blue Cross Blue Shield; FBI; United States Air Force; Canadian Air Force; Monsanto. He designed the fitness program for the Atlanta Police Department, Coca Cola and other corporations.

He briefly left the 'Y' to teach and coach baseball at Oglethorpe University, Atlanta GA. After teaching at Oglethorpe University, he returned to the "Y" as



Physical Director and during this tenure, he wrote "*What Every Mom Need's to Know about Football*" and "*What Every Mom Need's to Know About Basketball*".

In early 1977, Bill was approached by Dr Frank Harrington, Senior Pastor at Peachtree Presbyterian Church, and asked to direct the 'Family Life Center' the church was planning to build. Bill accepted the position and started work with the church, May 1, 1977.

The Family Life Center included adult education classes and sports and recreation classes and quickly outgrew the facility that housed the programs. The Northside YMCA that was located adjacent to the church had moved to another location, and the church bought the "Y" building and property. Bill had dreams of building a world-class fitness complex at Peachtree Presbyterian, now called The Gym at Peachtree. Bills dream was realized, as the The Gym at Peachtree now boasts 1750 members, 65 adult basketball teams, 650 youth basketball players, 500 youth sports participants, 150 skating and hockey players, 500 gymnasts, 500 bridge players, 200 dancers, and over 1000 summer campers.

In addition to his passion for physical fitness, Bill had a deeply committed to bringing positive change to the lives of young people. He wanted to bring hope and help to those whom others ignored. He had a vision to move outside the walls of the gym and inspire the entire community of Atlanta to help each other. He wanted to help transform Atlanta through community service programs that focused on education, mentoring, and coaching. Bill created two outreach programs as the recreation director at The Gym: The nationally recognized *Techwood Outreach Program Thru Sports (TOPS)* program designed to keep inner city youth in school through sports and LaAmistad – an award winning after school program that supports the education of Latino students and families through academic enrichment, mentoring, and sports.

Bill identified social needs and created unique solutions for solving them.

In the spring of 2000, Bill noticed a group of Hispanic children getting off the school bus across the street from Peachtree Presbyterian Church. He soon learned these children had parents who spoke very little to no English and could not help them with their homework. These students started coming for afterschool tutoring and their parents came from classes in English as a Second Language. In 2001 LaAmistad was born; the handful of students has grown to 65 students and over 100 volunteers meeting 5 days a week with a waiting list.

With LaAmistad, Bill sought to improve the lives of ALL members of the Buckhead community. His vision of LaAmistad is now bigger and better than ever. The program currently boasts: one on one tutoring opportunities, reading and math enrichment, sports programs, and a variety of personal development programs for its students. LaAmistad also serves as a resource center for

families in NW Atlanta, providing them with information on employment, health, counseling, legal and financial services, and scholarship information. LaAmistad is the two-time winner of the Atlanta Public School's A+ Achievement award. What started as Bill's vision has blossomed into a multi-dimensional program serving our neighbors and strengthening our community.

Bill was married to Jackie Reed Maness and they have two children, Mark and Julie, daughter-in-law Terri and 4 grandchildren, Ashlie, Britnie, Ansley and Reed.

Bill penned 6 books:

- Exercise Your Heart
- Recreation Ministry- A Guide For All Congregations
- What Every Mom Need's to Know about Football
- What Every Mom Need's to Know About Basketball
- How To Pass Your FAA Flight Physical
- Norman, The Warm Hearted Elf