James W. “Bill” Martino


He was born Sept. 23, 1933 in Cherokee to Frank and Virginia Martino. He grew up in Cherokee and graduated in 1951 from Crawford Community High School. As a high school athlete he established new conference records in the broad jump and high hurdles.

His studies at Pittsburg State University were interrupted by the Korean War. He served in the U.S. Navy aboard the USS Warrington destroyer for two years. He then returned to college and graduated from PSU in 1956. He was a member of the varsity championship track team and was president of Kappa Mu Epsilon, honorary mathematics fraternity.

After graduation he was a Flight Test Engineer for leading aerospace manufacturers such as Boeing and Lockheed Aircraft. At age 40 he returned to PSU to study creative writing. As a freelance writer he was a published novelist and poet, and for 10 years a professional journalist whose articles appeared in national magazines.

At age 49 he joined the Peace Corps and traveled to Nepal. He converted to the Buddhist religion and married Ang Yangdu Sherpa, a member of the Sherpa clan who live near Mt. Everest. During the last 20 years he founded and operated Himalayan Imports, an internet business which sells knives manufactured in Nepal. His business provided employment for 150 of the poorest of Nepal's people.

He is survived by his wife, Ang Yangdu Martino of Reno, a son, James W. Martino, Jr. of New Orleans; a brother, Fred Martino of Girard; and two sisters, Jerry Martino and Frances Phillips, both of Springfield and three grandchildren.

He will be cremated and his ashes scattered on the hills surrounding the Swayambunath Buddhist Temple near Kathmandu, Nepal.

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