

Murrill, William Lawrence (1926–2011)

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William Lawrence Murrill was a church planter, pastor, educator, administrator, treasurer, missionary, missiologist, and philanthropist.

Early Life

William Lawrence Murrill was born May 28, 1926, in Ripley, West Virginia, U.S.A.,¹ the third child of William Adair Murrill (June 24, 1872-December 17, 1942) and Florence Marie Chase (June 14, 1885-July 1974).² He had two sisters and one brother: Florence Anne Murrill (May 17, 1960-June 30, 2006); Jane Adair Murrill (September 29, 1920-1960); and Robert Carter Murrill (December 31, 1929-April 5, 2010).³

When William was 3 years old, his family accepted the Seventh-day Adventist faith through the labor of M. G. Cogner who held evangelistic meetings in Ripley following a camp meeting.⁴

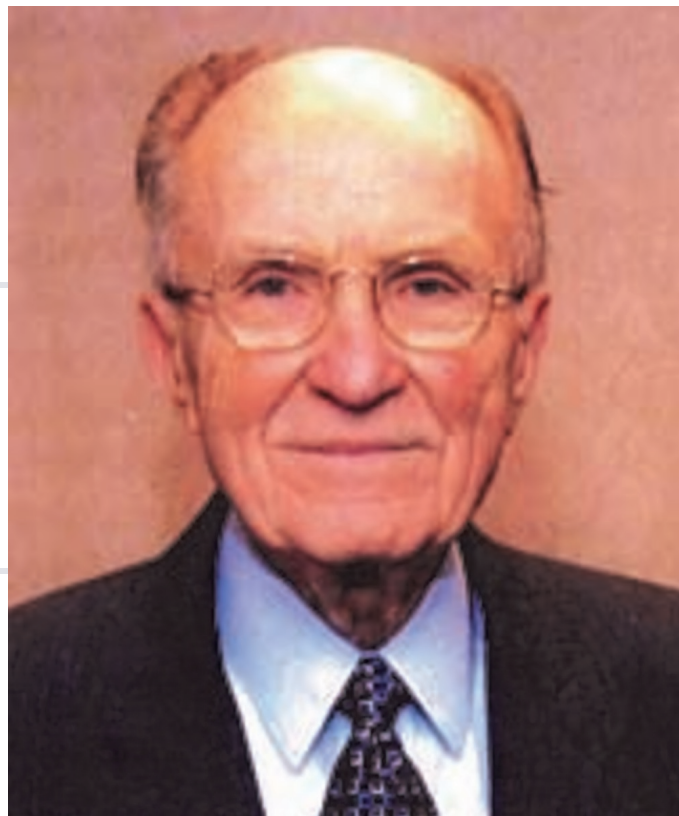
Education and Marriage

Murrill obtained his bachelor's degree in business administration from Washington Missionary College (now Washington Adventist University) in 1949.⁵ During a furlough from missionary service in 1961, he pursued his post-graduate studies and earned a master's degree in systematic theology from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in 1961.⁶

In June 1958, Murrill married Ruth Elvira Wilson, a nurse at Washington Sanitarium and Hospital,⁷ daughter of Neil C. Wilson.⁸ Ruth is the aunt of the present Adventist World Church president, Ted N. C. Wilson.⁹ William and Ruth Murrill had two sons, Larry and Roger.¹⁰

Ministry

After college graduation, Murrill joined the staff of the purchasing department of the General Conference and served as chief accountant and cashier for two years.¹¹ He and his wife then moved to Burma to work at Rangoon Adventist Hospital¹² as business manager from 1951 to 1957.¹³ While there, he spearheaded the fundraising for a new extension of the Rangoon Adventist Hospital while Ruth joined the medical staff.¹⁴ During his term as business manager, the Yangon Mission Hospital expanded and became a 115 bed hospital, considered as one of the four largest medical institution in Yangon as well as the cleanest hospital in Myanmar.¹⁵ However, the government nationalized and took over Rangoon Adventist Hospital on July 5, 1965.¹⁶



William Lawrence Murrill
From *Adventist Review* Online:
<http://archives.adventistreview.org/article/4968/archives/issue-2011-1534/34-cn-william-murrill-dies> Accessed on August 26, 2018.

In 1958, Murrill became secretary-treasurer and auditor of Myanmar Union Mission.¹⁷ On March 20, 1958, a new S'Gaw Karen Voice of Prophecy School opened.¹⁸ During the furlough of C. B. Guild in 1959, W. L. Murrill served as acting chairman, and Pastor Kalee Paw as acting secretary of the union mission.¹⁹ While he was acting president of the Burma Union, J. F. Ashlock, D. S. Johnson, and R. A. Anderson ordained Murrill on January 23, 1960.²⁰ He then became the president of the church's work in Burma from 1962 to 1966.²¹

Because of Ruth's health and upon the recommendation of the Southern Asia Division, the General Conference authorized the couple to return to the United States on April 14, 1966.²² William became secretary-treasurer of the Washington Conference that same year. On July 11, 1968, Murrill became president of the Washington Conference.²³ After serving for five years as president, in June 1972, Murrill went to the Lake Union Conference as treasurer,²⁴ succeeding W. F. Miller in 1972.²⁵ While treasurer of the Lake Union Conference, he received a call to serve at the General Conference headquarters as assistant treasurer and continued in the position until 1980.

The General Conference Session in June 1980 elected him undertreasurer of the General Conference for the years of 1980-1985.²⁶ His term eventually extended until 1991. He then served as the director of personnel administration at the General Conference until his retirement, August 1, 1992 after serving the church for 43 years.²⁷

Later Life and Contribution

Not much is recorded about Murrill's life after his retirement. He died at age 85 on December 5, 2011, in Shawnee, Kansas, United States. His funeral took place at the New Haven Seventh-day Adventist Church in Overland Park, Kansas, December 10, 2011.²⁸

Murrill spent 15 years of his 43 years of service for the church in various administrative posts in Burma. As a result, he understood the challenges and possibilities of reaching Buddhists and shared his insights through his writings.²⁹ He also held several seminars on finance around the world, educating the church members and leaders on the flow of finance in the church.

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NOTES

1. ANN Staff, "William Murrill Dies," accessed August 26, 2018, <http://archives.adventistreview.org/article/4968/archives/issue-2011-1534/34-cn-william-murrill-dies>; see also U.S. *WWII Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-194*. Lehi, UT, U.S.A.: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011, accessed August, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>. Cf. W. B. Hill, "Obituaries." *Columbia Union Visitor*, March 4, 1943, 6.?
2. See Robin Murrill's Family tree in Ancestry.com. Accessed August, 2018, <http://ancestry.com>?
3. Ibid.,?
4. W. B. Hill, "Obituaries," *Columbia Union Visitor*, March 4, 1943, 6.?
5. "William Murrill Dies."?
6. Ibid.?
7. James Orville Wilson, *Advent Angels in Burma* (Wayne, IN: Friends of Burma, 1971), 115, 225.?
8. See M. M. Kauntul, "Java Churches Visited" *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, July, 1952, 4, accessed April 9, 2020, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/FEDO/FEDO19520701-V38-07.pdf>?
9. "William Murrill Dies"?
10. F. W. Wernick, "W. L. Murrill Joins Lake Union Staff," *Lake Union Herald*, August 1, 1972, 6.?
11. *Southern Asia Tidings*, October 1, 1955, 16.?
12. Wilson, *Advent Angels in Burma*, 115, 225.?
13. See *SDA Yearbook*, 1957, 269.?
14. "William Murrill Dies."?
15. U Kyaw Din, *Southern-Asia Tidings*, March 1, 1958, 4; cf. *SDA Yearbook*, 1957, 269.?
16. Wilson, *Advent Angels in Burma*, 115, 225; cf. "William Murrill Dies."?
17. P.A. Parker, *Southern Asia Tidings*, November 15, 1958, 2; cf. *SDA Yearbook*, 1958, 176. Other records tell that Murrill was appointed as secretary-treasurer of Burma Union Mission but the *SDA Yearbook* indicates that his appointment to the office took place as in 1958; cf. "William Murrill Dies."?
18. Frank C. Wyman, "Opening of the Sgaw Karen School in Rangoon," *Southern Asia Tidings*, May 1, 1958, 5.?
19. *Southern Asia Tidings*, March 15, 1959, 4.?
20. See *Southern Asia Tidings*, March 1, 1960, 7; *Southern Asia Tidings*, May 1, 1960, 12.?
21. "William Murrill Dies."?
22. Minutes General Conference Committee Index for 1966, 66, Adventist Archives, accessed August 26, 2018. <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1966Index.pdf>. Cf. "William Murrill Dies."?
23. *Southern Asia Tidings*, September 1, 1968, 3.?
24. Wernick, "W. L. Murrill Joins Lake Union Staff," 6.?
25. Ibid.; Cf. "People in Transition," *Gleaner*, August 21, 1972, 4.?
26. Wanda Sample, Inter-American News Flash, June 24th 1980, 2; cf. Twelfth business meeting: Fifty-third General Conference session April 24, 1980, *ARH*, April 27, 1980, 23.?
27. "William L. Murrill Retires." *ARH*, July 2, 1992, 7.?

28. "William Murrill Dies,"?

29. See W. L. Murrill, "The Challenges of Buddhism," *Ministry*, November, 1966, 27-30; W. L. Murrill, "The Challenges of Buddhism (Part 2)," *Ministry*, December, 1966, 36-38; W. L. Murrill, "The Challenges of Buddhism (Concluded)," *Ministry*, January, 1967, 26-28.?

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