

In Memory of William W. Schumann, CPO, FAAOP AAOP Past President 1998-99



January 31, 1946 – June 23, 2026

We remember William W. “Bill” Schumann, CPO, FAAOP, who passed away on June 23, 2026 at the age to 80, with gratitude for a life devoted to restoring movement, dignity, confidence, and possibility. To speak of Bill is to speak of a clinician, a craftsman, a teacher, a leader, and a colleague whose influence reached far beyond any single clinic, hospital, or city. He gave more than technical skill to the profession of orthotics and prosthetics; he gave it patience, curiosity, mentorship, and a deep respect for the people whose lives depended on thoughtful care.

Bill’s professional journey began in 1966, when he encountered the emerging field of prosthetics while studying at Chicago City College. Drawn by the rare combination of science, hand skill, problem-solving, and human service, he changed course and joined one of the early associate degree programs in prosthetics developed through Northwestern University Prosthetic -Orthotic Center (NUPOC) and the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. He graduated in 1968, completed a residency with Dreher-Jouett Orthotics and Prosthetics in Chicago, and earned his American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics, National Prosthetic Practitioner Certification in 1970 and professional title of CP. Those early years shaped the foundation of a career that would span more than five decades.

In 1972, Bill moved to Boston, where he helped establish an orthotics and prosthetics practice at Boston Children’s Hospital alongside M. E. “Bill” Miller, CO. That opportunity became one of the defining chapters of his life’s work. In Boston, he contributed to care for children and families facing cerebral palsy, scoliosis, spina bifida, limb loss, and complex orthopedic needs. His work was part of a remarkable period of clinical growth that included the Boston Brace for scoliosis, the Boston Overlap for spondylolysis and spondylolisthesis, expanded use of solid ankle-foot orthoses, and advances in prosthetic socket interface sign. Bill extended his Practitioner Certification to include Orthotics 1975, gaining the title of professional title of CPO, reflecting the breadth of his dedication across both prosthetics and orthotics.

His career later continued in other settings, including his work as a cranial remolding specialist in Rhode Island, where he brought decades of experience to infants and families needing careful, compassionate orthotic care. Wherever he practiced, Bill was known not simply for what he knew, but for how he practiced: with steady hands, a generous spirit, and a willingness to teach. He saw every clinical conversation as a chance to learn, and every patient encounter as a responsibility to listen first.

Bill's service to the profession extended well beyond patient care. As president of the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists, he helped lead a professional community devoted to education, clinical excellence, research, and ethical practice. The initials FAAOP after his name reflected fellowship in the Academy, but his true fellowship was lived in the relationships he built—with colleagues, residents, students, physicians, therapists, technicians, and patients. He represented the best of a profession that combines engineering and anatomy, artistry and empathy, tradition and innovation.

Over the course of his career, Bill earned the respect and recognition of his peers. His professional recognitions included certification by the American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics, first as a prosthetist in 1970 and later as a certified prosthetist-orthotist in 1975; fellowship in the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists, reflected in the FAAOP designation; election to leadership as president of the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists; and receipt of the Academy Members Titus-Ferguson Award. That award stands as a meaningful acknowledgment from his professional community of his service, leadership, and lasting contribution to orthotics and prosthetics. Public tributes from the O&P community also recognized him as a practitioner whose career extended more than 50 years and whose work helped shape pediatric orthotic and prosthetic care in Boston and beyond.

But no list of titles, certifications, offices, or honors can fully measure Bill's legacy. His legacy lives in the children who stood straighter, the amputees who walked with greater confidence, the families who felt heard, the young clinicians who found direction, and the colleagues who became better because they worked beside him. He understood that orthotics and prosthetics is never only about devices. It is about people; about helping someone return to school, work, play, family, independence, and hope.

To those who knew him personally, Bill was more than a professional leader. He was a presence: thoughtful, steady, humble, and generous with his knowledge. He had the rare ability to make complex problems feel solvable and to make people feel valued in the process. His influence was quiet but durable, built not on self-promotion, but on service repeated day after day, patient after patient, year after year.

In his spare time, Bill also found joy in the early aspiring years of Formula Ford Open-Wheeled Racing in the late 60's and early 70's. It was a fitting passion for him and a few other NUPOC Classmates who appreciated precision, design, speed, discipline, and the art of making complex systems work beautifully. Whether following the engineering, the strategy, the drivers, or the

drama of a race weekend, Formula Ford Racing gave him another way to enjoy excellence in motion. For those who knew this side of him, it was one more reminder of his curiosity, his attention to detail, and his delight in skill performed at the highest levels.

Above all, outside of work, Bill immensely enjoyed spending time with his wife, Mary Ellen, and socializing with family and friends on their back porch of their 1st home in Nahant Bay, Massachusetts, which always seemed to be open. Their porch became a place of welcome conversation, laughter, and connection—a reflection of the hospitality Bill and Mary Ellen offered so naturally. For those fortunate enough to gather there, it was not just a place to sit; it was a place to feel included, to share stories, and to enjoy the warmth of friendship and family.

As we honor William W. Schumann, CPO, FAAOP, we give thanks for a life that helped others move forward. We remember his skill, his leadership, his mentorship, and his humanity. We remember the Boston chapters, the years beyond Boston, the years of Academy Board & Committee service, the professional recognition, and most of all, the countless lives touched by his care. May his memory be a blessing, and may the profession he helped shape continue to carry forward his example of excellence, humility, and compassion.

This Eulogy was co-authored by Bill's college classmates from the Northwestern University Prosthetic-Orthotic Center (NUPOC) in Chicago, where his illustrious career in prosthetics and orthotics began, and who are Ohio O&P colleagues, John N. Billock and Richard J. "Rich" Rosenburg, CPO.

The following is the link to Bill's Obituary and the "Celebration of Life" that will be held on July 7th, and where condolences and remembrances may be left to his wife, Mary Ellen and their family, and where commemorative gifts and contributions may be made in Bill's name.

<https://www.bostoncremation.org/obituaries/William-Bill-Schumann?obId=48819008>