William “Bill” Haberman, Jr.

William Haberman Jr. passed away peacefully days before his 98th birthday in LIJ Forest Hills hospital. Bill came to the US as a teenager from Buttenheim, Germany, and joined the Army during WWII. He served as an aircraft gunner in South Pacific and during one battle on the island of Leyte in the Philippines he was injured and lost many of his fellow combatants and was discharged in 1945 with medals of honor and a Purple Heart.

He started to come to the Pines in the late 1950s but when his dear friends, including John LaMontaine, a conductor at the inauguration for JFK in D.C., left for LA, Bill stayed and purchased a co-op. A fire that consumed young boy’s life in the Pines inspired him to join the Pines Fire Department. During his 53 years as an active and life-time member, he worked tirelessly and with dedication and was proud to be part of the department where he served alongside the first Black chief - Arthur Bond, the first woman chief - Carol LaFountaine, and the youngest chief - Bruce Van Brunt in the State of New York. For decades, Bill made breakfasts every Saturday morning for the men and women in the department he loved before drills.

Bill served 30 years as the fire department Treasurer and 20 years as a Fire Commissioner. In his early years as Treasurer, he visited door to door raising funds for the department. In 1978, he was among a group of people in the department who needed to raise the funds to purchase a First Class A Pumper truck. Bill’s contribution to making BEACH a huge success, selling double the planned 2,000 tickets, was traveling back and forth to the mainland to get liquor and gaming licenses from NY State and Suffolk County officials. With his two index fingers typing skills, he spent an enormous amount of time making official fire department letters, monthly, quarterly and annual statements year after year.

Bill graduated from the Pratt Institute in mid 1950s with degrees of Architecture and Interior Design. He worked for Schmieg and Kotzian, Inc. for many years before he became sole practitioner. His clients were prominent real estate developers, Wall Street financiers, and medical doctors. He designed their offices in NYC and homes in Westchester, Rye, and Scarsdale. His designs were timeless and were used by his clients over three or even four decades. His designs were also innovative, for example, being the first to incorporate an X-Ray reading machine in an orthopedics office in the 1960s. He also donated his time in the design of the new fire house.

Bill loved the Pines and never missed a weekend unless he was visiting friends such as Helen Kraft and Arthur Bond. He was known to spend hours with people sharing the Pines history so that our legacy lives on in the people he touched. Bill is survived by his loving partner of 23 years, B. Andrew Jung.