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## in memoriam



William Begell, 1927–2009

William (Bill) Begell, 82, died on Saturday, July 4 2009 at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York after a protracted illness. Bill had been President of Begell House Inc., the publisher of many journals, books and handbooks in the heat transfer area. He had a long history in publishing, starting as a co-founder of Scripta Technica in 1962 and continuing with the founding of Hemisphere Publishing Corporation in 1966 and Begell House Inc., in 1991. The medical and heat transfer and fluid flow areas have always been the main foci of Bill Begell's publishing activities, the latter reflecting his early career as Engineering Director of the Heat Transfer Research Facility at Columbia University. A leading figure in scientific publishing, he was one of the founding members of the Society of Scholarly Publishing and has received many awards. He was a Fellow of ASME and received the 2005 ASME Heat Transfer Division Distinguished Service Award.

Bill Begell will be remembered not only for his many professional achievements but also for his remarkable character. He retained his love of life, his sense of humor, and his empathetic nature despite a truly tragic history. He was born (as Wilhelm Beigel) in Vilnius (then Vilna) in Lithuania (then Poland) on May 18, 1927. Vilnius was subjected successively to Russian, German and (again) Russian invasions and Bill was the only

member of his family who survived. Bill's father (Ferdinand) was shot by the SS on September 4, 1943. A week and a half later, on September 23, Bill, together with his mother and maternal grandmother were sent to the Heereskrafahrpark labor camp (HKP) in a move intended to save them from deportation and death. With the encouragement of his family, Bill escaped from the HKP on June 30, 1944 but, tragically, his mother and grandmother were deported four days later and killed. After the "liberation" of Vilnius in July 1944, Bill made his way westward and finished his schooling in post-Nazi Germany. He eventually immigrated to the USA in June 1947, where he trained and pursued a career as an engineer and, eventually, as a publisher.

The tragic aspect of Bill's life was continued in the untimely deaths of his beloved children (Freddie as a result of an accident and Alysia of leukaemia) and of his first wife Ester, who died of heart failure soon after the passing of Alysia. Despite the personal devastation that these events brought to Bill, he somehow recovered and, until his final illness he appeared to have returned to something like (though never quite) his original self.

One of the many memorials for Bill's life is the legacy of ongoing publications which he founded; these include not only the publications of his company Begell House Inc. (which is still going strong under the leadership of Yelena Shafeyeva) but also through the many other publications which started under his guidance in earlier days. In particular, *Heat Transfer Engineering* had its beginnings under the tutelage of Bill Begell during his period at Taylor & Francis. On a journey from Tel Aviv to London, Ken Bell and myself were bemoaning the lack of practical journals in heat transfer. Rather than just talking about it, we co-opted Jerry Taborek and Ernst Schlunder and made a combined approach to Bill Begell who agreed to launch HTE with Ken Bell as the first Editor-in-Chief. I am sure that Bill Begell would be pleased to know that HTE is still meeting its objectives in publishing material of direct relevance to practical heat transfer.

Bill Begell was a quite remarkable person who, despite the tragedies which beset him, gave so much happiness to those he met. He was loved by his many friends, whose lives he enriched and who will miss him dearly.

Geoff Hewitt  
Founding Editor, *Heat Transfer Engineering*