

William P. Hood Jr. (Dec.21, 1934 - Jan.21, 2024)



Dr. Peter Kaellgren, Dr. Bill Hood, Dorothea Burstyn

At his first Toronto lecture, 2004

William (Bill) Hood is a name known to every collector of American flatware. His over 60 well-researched and beautifully photographed articles were published in *Silver Magazine*, *Magazine Antiques*, *Silver Studies* (the journal of the English Silver Society) and *Silver Society of Canada Journal*. These articles not only showed the seemingly endless variety of American flatware patterns and forms, but also increased the interest in this collecting field and prices fetched.

While still working as cardiologist he researched the patterns of Tiffany flatware.

He often told the story how he had to pay a

hefty entrance fee to access the Tiffany archives, because they took a physician more for a hobbyist than a serious researcher. The result of spending long hours in the archives, visiting many antique fairs and getting in contact with prominent collectors was his book "Tiffany silver Flatware, 1845-1905, When Dining was an Art"¹, published by the Antique Collectors' Club, Suffolk in 1999 and reprinted in 2003. It is rightly considered the "Bible" for collecting Tiffany flatware.

Bill Hood was a member of the New York Silver Society, the English Silver Society and the Silver Society of Canada. But his heart belonged to a group of people which he cofounded called "Flatware Freaks". Roslyn Berlin, Dr. Bennett, Dorothea Burstyn, Charles Curb, Dr. Olson, Phyllis Tucker and Dr. Wiederhold were the core members of the group. They met once yearly at one of the members' homes and invited other prominent flatware collectors and dealers. Masses of flatware were shown; it was really a wonderful learning experience. Fond memories are shared of the meetings in Dothan, Columbia, Little Rock, New York City, San Antonio, Philadelphia and Toronto.

Bill Hood had a wonderful collection of flatware and like every collector he wanted to share his delight with a larger audience. His first exhibition of flatware was held at the Wiregrass Museum of Art, Dothan, AL. It had such a positive response that the Paul and Lulu Hillard University Art Museum, Lafayette, Louisiana showed interest to hold the next exhibition in 2011. This exhibition was a big success showcasing his large collection of contemporary flatware. It traced the evolution of flatware from traditional to non-traditional, from the late nineteenth century to the early twenty-first. Dr. Lee A. Gray, the show curator's mission was to show that good design can elevate relatively

mundane objects like forks, spoons, and knives to an art form and brought home to viewers that good design is an invisible luxury, often not even noticed but surely able to make our lives much better.

Bill Hood was a popular lecturer, speaking in Toronto at the Decorative Arts Symposium at the Royal Ontario Museum and many times at the Silver Society of Canada meetings. His lectures at the Bestecksammlertreffen (meetings of flatware collectors) in the Klängenmuseum Solingen, Germany, were very well received as the audience learned for the first time about the enormous variety and fantastic output of late 19th century American flatware. Here he made the acquaintance of a very knowledgeable dealer Heinrich Averwieser, who inspired him to start collecting even more modern flatware. This led to his next book: "Flatware That's not 'Flat', Design and Production of Innovative Table Cutlery, 1890 – 2015."²

Bill Hood was a very dedicated physician, in retirement he volunteered in a Respite Ministry program at his First United Methodist Church, providing one-on-one daycare four hours daily for adults with mild-to-moderate dementia such giving their caretakers a well-deserved break. Hanging on the wall in the church facility was a print by artist Marla Rae consisting of inspirational aphorisms that could also sum up Bill Hood's attitude to life: "Live joyfully.... Laugh abundantly.... Love affectionately.... Care deeply...Smile spontaneously.... And always remember that tomorrow is a new day." RIP Dorothea Burstyn

1. William P. Hood, Jr. with Roslyn Berlin and Edward Wawrynek, Photographs by Larry Stanly, *Tiffany Silver Flatware, 1845-1905, When Dining Was an Art*, Antique Collectors Club, Suffolk, UK, 1999, reprint 2003.
2. William P. Hood, Jr. *Flatware That's not 'Flat', Design and Production of Innovative Table Cutlery, 1890 – 2015*, available as e-book at Amazon.com.