

## **Biography of Majority Leader Bill Frist, M. D.**

Born on February 22, 1952 in Nashville, Tennessee, Bill Frist was raised in a family dedicated to helping people. His earliest memories are of his father, after dinner with his family, leaving with his black doctor's bag in hand to make his nightly rounds on patients at the hospital. This sense of service to others has been the driving force in Bill Frist's life.

True to the family profession, Frist enrolled in Princeton University to devote his career to medicine. While at Princeton, he developed an interest in medicine beyond its daily practice, spending his junior and senior years specializing in health care policy at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

This led him to a summer internship with veteran Tennessee Congressman Joe Evins in Washington, D.C. The "Dean" of the state's congressional delegation told the young intern that should he ever want to serve in Congress, he should first excel in a profession other than politics and then bring that experience back to Washington.

After graduating from Princeton in 1974, Frist pursued a medical degree at Harvard Medical School, where he graduated with honors in 1978. He spent the next six years in surgical training at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston and Southampton General Hospital in England.

In 1985 Frist accepted the position of senior fellow and chief resident at the Stanford University School of Medicine. There he studied heart transplantation with the field's leading pioneer, Norman Shumway. Bill Frist had found his medical calling in transplant surgery.

After completing his fellowship, Frist took his expertise back to his hometown of Nashville. In 1986 he started the Vanderbilt University Medical Center's heart and lung transplantation program. He also joined Vanderbilt's faculty and the Nashville Veterans Administration Hospital as staff surgeon.

Frist immediately began building on his vision for an innovative transplantation facility that would bring into one center transplant specialists, scientists, and ethicists from a range of disciplines. In 1989 he founded and became surgical director of the multi-organ Vanderbilt Transplant Center. Today the center is one of the premier transplant facilities in the United States.

During his 20 years in medicine, Bill Frist performed over 150 heart and lung transplant procedures -- including the first lung transplant and the first pediatric heart transplant in Tennessee and the first successful combined heart- lung transplant in the Southeast. He wrote over 100 articles, chapters and abstracts on medical research and was co-author of *Grand Rounds in Transplantation*.

Bill Frist had risen to the top of the medical profession at a remarkably young age. And he was devoting his life to what he cared about most -- helping people. But Frist believed he could do even more for medicine, for patients, and for the people of Tennessee and the United States of America.

In 1989 Frist wrote and published *Transplant: A Heart Surgeon's Account of the Life-and-Death Dramas of the New Medicine*. He sought to dispel myths about transplantation, encourage people to become organ donors, and examine the social and ethical issues of transplantation and organ donation. He lectured nationally on the subject and led the successful campaign to return the organ donor card to the back of the Tennessee driver's license.

Frist then began exploring the idea of seeking public office. In 1990 he met with fellow Tennessean Howard Baker and talked with the former U.S. Senate Majority Leader about the benefits and burdens of public service. Baker told Frist that the Senate would provide the best forum for his talents and expertise.

Frist kept up his public involvement, writing newspaper columns about healthcare policy and chairing a statewide task force on Medicaid reform. In 1992, upon the advice of Baker, he began traveling Tennessee and talking with people about a possible run for the United States Senate. Frist officially launched his campaign in 1994.

After defeating five opponents in a hard-fought primary, Frist faced a popular three-term senator. The campaign unfolded as a battle between a career politician and a populist outsider. Bill Frist won by a resounding 13 points and became the first practicing physician elected to the Senate since 1928.

Six years later Senator Frist won reelection with 66 percent of the vote -- the largest vote total ever received by a candidate for statewide election in the history of Tennessee. During that time, he also wrote his third book -- *Tennessee Senators 1911-2002: Portraits of Leadership in a Century of Change*.

As a United States Senator, Bill Frist has emerged as one of the leading voices on health issues in America today. He has worked hard to strengthen Medicare, provide seniors with better access to prescription drugs, reduce health care disparities among races, and make health care more affordable and accessible. A member of the Health, Labor, Education and Pension committee, Frist's unique blend of policy and medical expertise has enabled him to address those and many other leading health issues.

Frist's expertise in infectious diseases has enabled him to take on one of the greatest threats to the health and security of our nation -- bioterrorism. During the October 2001 anthrax attacks, Frist was a calming voice for the Senate community and the country as a whole. He quickly worked to pass landmark legislation to bolster America's defenses against bioterrorism. He then wrote his fourth book -- *When Every Moment Counts* -- to help families prepare for future attacks. The Senator donated all profits to a local preparedness charity in Tennessee.

Bill Frist has been one of America's strongest advocates for increasing funding for global HIV/AIDS. He sponsored the landmark legislation -- boldly proposed by President Bush in his 2003 State of the Union address -- to provide \$15 billion to combat global HIV/AIDS in African and Caribbean nations hardest hit by the disease. This law will literally save millions of lives and stands as one of the greatest public health accomplishments in modern history.

As he has done with bioterrorism, Frist has also taken the fight against global HIV/AIDS beyond the Senate chamber. At least once a year, he travels to Sub-Saharan Africa as part of a medical mission team to care for those suffering from HIV/AIDS and other illnesses.

America's children have been another top priority for Senator Frist. He was the author of "Ed- flex" -- a groundbreaking law giving teachers and schools more freedom from federal regulations and more flexibility to improve student performance. Frist is also a strong supporter of President Bush's *No Child Left Behind Act*. Reducing childhood obesity, halting childhood vaccine shortages, and fighting drug abuse have been a focus of Senator Frist's efforts to improve the health of our children.

Senator Frist served as one of only two congressional representatives to the U.N. General Assembly in the 107th Congress. And he has risen rapidly through the ranks of Senate leadership. In 1999 he served as a deputy whip. One year later he was unanimously elected chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC). In 2002, under Frist's leadership, the party of the President regained the Senate majority in mid-term elections for the first time in history and picked up Senate seats in mid-term elections for the first time in 30 years.

On December 23, 2002 Republican Senators unanimously elected Bill Frist to the position of Majority Leader of the United States Senate, having served fewer total years in Congress than any Majority Leader in history.

Bill Frist cherishes family and the values family represents. He has been married to his wife, Karyn, for 22 years. A Lubbock, Texas native, Karyn is a longstanding advocate for the arts, children, and women's health issues. She has been a leader in the Race for the Cure in both Tennessee and nationally. She is also an active supporter of Childhelp -- a national organization dedicated to preventing child abuse -- and a board member of the Children's Inn at the National Institutes of Health.

Bill and Karyn Frist are also the parents of three teenage sons -- Harrison, Jonathan and Bryan. Harrison is a sophomore at Princeton University. Jonathan and Bryan attend high school in Washington, D.C. The family is a member of the National Presbyterian Church. Bill Frist enjoys flying (commercial, instrument, and multiengine pilot), running (7 marathons), medical mission trips to Africa, and writing. He is board certified in general surgery and heart surgery.