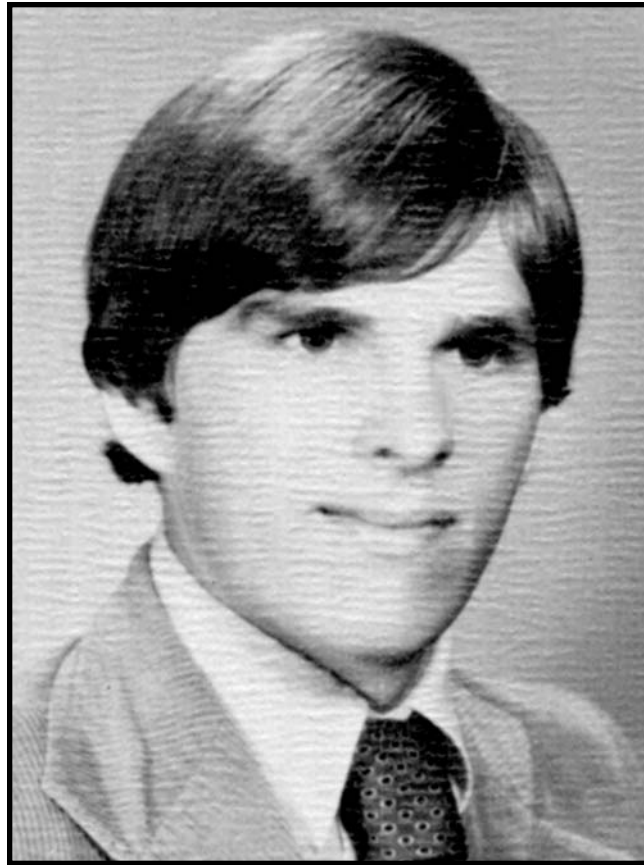


Watchung Hills Regional High School Hall of Fame



Thomas William Simpson
Novelist
Class of 1975

All through his years at Pennsylvania State University, “Bill” Simpson pursued two academic interests he had developed as a student at Watchung Hills: history and English.

After graduating from college, he did some “stringer work” for the Associated Press and started a newsletter, “Adventure Travel Enterprises,” which enabled him to travel extensively. All the while, he submitted stories to some of the foremost magazines, such as *The New Yorker*, *Harper’s* and *Atlantic Monthly*, but with no success.

As sometimes happens to writers, a moment of inspiration occurred—in a great cathedral, Westminster Abbey—and the plan for a book just “exploded in his brain.” Within a relatively short time, he produced his first novel, “*This Way Madness Lies*.” It was published by Warner Books as a main selection of the Book of the Month Club, reviewed very positively by the *New York Times*, among others, and optioned by Paramount Pictures. The novel, which contained names, places and incidents familiar to residents of the Watchung Hills area, was especially embraced by area readers and later was translated into a dozen languages.

Once the ice had been broken, further writings came fast and furious. “*The Gypsy Story-teller*,” 1993, caused *Publisher’s Weekly* to cite Bill as “among the finest voices of his generation.” In 1994, “*Full Moon Over America*” appeared; in 1996, “*Fingerprints of Armless Mike*.” Bantam Books published “*The Caretaker*” in 1998, Bill’s first psychological thriller and bestseller. “*The Hancock Boys*” appeared in 2000, and “*The Editor*,” in 2002.