



**Name:** William B. Ziff Jr.

**Years:** June 24, 1930- September 9, 2006

**Residence:** Pawling, NY

**Brief Biography:** William B. Ziff Jr. was born into the world of publishing. His father was the co-founder of Ziff-Davis, a small family-owned publishing company. However, Ziff had never intended to go into publishing himself. He graduated from Rutgers University and then went on to do postgraduate work in philosophy at the University of Madrid and Heidelberg University in Germany. When his father unexpectedly passed away in 1953 Ziff, then only 23, returned home from Germany to take over the company. He soon bought out Bernard Davis, the other co-founder and transformed Ziff Davis into a publisher of niche-magazines. He was soon publishing titles like *Car and Driver* and *World Aviation Directory*. The company saw great success at a time when many once popular general-interest magazines were failing. Ziff's niche-market magazines appealed to enthusiasts as well as those within the business, an advertiser's dream, thus ensuring his company's success. Later on, when the computer industry began to boom Ziff saw the opportunity for another niche-market and began publishing titles like *PC Magazine* and *Computer Shopper*.

In 1978 Ziff was diagnosed with prostate cancer and given only a few years to live. At that point he chose to sell his recreation and business magazines, leaving the Ziff-Davis Company with only a few computer oriented titles. The decision to keep them proved wise, as the personal computer business started to pick up, Ziff-Davis continued to climb to the top of the technology magazine business. Many believed Ziff had the innate ability to see the future as he had predicted the trends in Special Interest and Computer Magazines. However, Ziff himself believed that what set him apart was his ability to focus on the present while many in the magazine business were still focused on the past. As time went on, Ziff realized that he had to secure a future for his company. None of his three sons had any interest in taking it over so in 1994, he sold the company to Forstmann Little & Co. for \$1.4 billion. He spent the rest of his years with his wife Tamsen Ann Ziff at their quiet home in Pawling, NY.

**Major Accomplishments:** Built two magazine empires in special-interest and technology areas.

Responsible for many of today's top selling titles.

**References:** [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/12/obituaries/12ziff.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/12/obituaries/12ziff.html?_r=1)

<http://articles.latimes.com/2006/sep/12/local/me-ziff12>