By 1974 John Williams, playing for the Baltimore Colts, had two NFL Super Bowls under his belt, while attending college during the off seasons to earn a dental degree from the University of Maryland at Baltimore. Williams had been drafted in the first round by the Baltimore Colts and went on to play for the Los Angeles Rams. He played in three Super Bowls, winning one in 1971.

He left the NFL in 1980 after 12 years to launch a dental practice on West Broadway in North Minneapolis.

Williams had played for the Minnesota Gophers in the mid-1960s, earning All-Big Ten honors while helping lead Minnesota to a co-Big Ten championship in 1967.

Williams, 66, died Saturday, July 7, 2012 near his Northside neighborhood home while he was taking a walk.

Williams had kidney disease and underwent kidney transplant surgery last month at Mayo Clinic. Williams' longtime friend, former Gophers trainer Steve Nestor, donated the kidney. Nestor was a trainer for the 1967 Gopher team on which Williams earned All-Big Ten lineman honors.

William English, retired Control Data executive, educator, and businessman described Williams as "probably one of the best of all the men I have known in my life." He called Williams a "great friend and great human being."

Williams' legacy, said English, is anchored in the 35 years he invested on West Broadway at his dental practice. Being a retired pro football player, he could have lived anywhere and started his business anywhere. But because of his background, he wanted to serve his own community so he chose to live and build a business on West Broadway in North Minneapolis.

Williams was president of the West Broadway Business Association (now West Broadway Business and Area Coalition - WBAC) and a past board member of the Minneapolis Urban League. He served as President of the American Odontological Forensics Society of America, served as the Chair of NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center, and several other nonprofit organizations in Minneapolis. He was also a Fellow of the American Society of Forensic Odontology, member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and the Monitors.

Diana Hawkins, former Comcast Cable executive, and vice-chair of Minneapolis Urban League Board of Directors echoed the sentiment. "From a community standpoint he was simply a very committed person. He was always reliable. He was an everyday hero and everybody loved him. He was the type of person you could go to," said Hawkins, who served with Williams on the Board of West Broadway Business Association.

Current WBAC chair Jackie Cherryhomes said Williams' "monumental commitment to the community was absolutely unparalleled. Everywhere I have gone this week, every meeting I was engaged in was part of what 'Doc" was working on. Even so, he was not one to draw attention to what he was doing. It was all about and for the community."

"The kind of person he was, 'worked' in every context. He was entrepreneurial with a focus on building our community," said Cherryhomes, former president of Minneapolis City Council elected from North Minneapolis' 5th Ward. "He was integral to the growth of the West Broadway business community. He was the center of the renewal of West Broadway."

Williams also a pilot who flew small planes as a hobby, was appointed to Metropolitan Airports Commission and served on the commission under Republican, Democrat, and Independence Party governors. He was honored as Minneapolis Volunteer of the Year in 1992 for his work with prison inmates. He led a prison ministry team for almost 20 years.

Reverend Randolph W. Staten called Williams an "extraordinary human being... a humble man who did so many good things." Staten said Dr. Williams and he were part of a small group of men who held Bible Study at 6am every Tuesday morning. "Through the Bible study we grew by talking about ourselves and our life experiences."

"He always talked about reaching out. His prison ministry was an important part of his life. He said, 'they gave more to me than I gave to them.'"

"As close as we were, I didn't know he was a pilot. And I knew him well. Most people would not know about his successful professional sports career. He did not talk a lot about his athleticism. That did not define him," Staten said.

"He was, however, what we need more of," Staten said. "He had talent, skill and achievement and he chose to remain in the community. He remained committed to the community and was embedded in economic development of North Minneapolis."

With training in forensic dentistry, Dr. Williams was a member of the Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team, a program of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Following the September 11 tragedy in New York City, he participated on the identification team at the Chief Medical Examiner's Office.

He lived and practiced a credo of service in the community and nationally. In an interview posted on his company's website, Dr. Williams said, ""Part of our responsibility as dentists is to motivate and educate, as well as treat. We cannot turn our backs on people who are suffering from health care disparities. If all dental and medical professionals participate, we can address the problems."

Williams was born October 27, 1945 in Jackson, Mississippi to Reverend Reuben Williams and Bessie Rodgers. He was preceded in death by his two brothers, Charles Williams and Earl Williams; his mother, Bessie Williams; his sister, Susan Smith, and his father, Reverend Reuben Williams.

Williams is survived by his wife, Barbara Butts-Williams, three sons, Jay Williams, Justin Williams, and Michael Baccus Williams; his grandson, Liam McKay Keiser Williams; his brothers, Allen (Sharon) Williams, Dr. Jerry (Joyce) Williams, Reverend James (Coretha) Williams; his sisters, Dr. Ruby (Antoine) Hunt, Wanda Smith-Lee (Tommie) Lee; his father-in-law, Sollie Butts; his brothers-in-law, Eugene Butts, Lewis (Margaret) Butts, Vincent Butts, Raymond (Mary Alice)Talley; his sisters-in-law, Lucy (Albert) Jones, Carista Wilson, and a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, and friends.

Barbara Butts-Williams is the dean of the School of Education at Capella University in Minneapolis and was recently appointed to the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority, which will work on the development of the Vikings' new stadium in downtown Minneapolis.

Funeral services were Saturday July 14, at Speak the Word Church International, 515 Jersey Avenue South, Golden Valley, Minnesota 55426.

Memorials and donations can be made to NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center, 1313 Penn Avenue North, Minneapolis, 55412; North Community YMCA Youth and Teen Enrichment Center, 1711 West Broadway, Minneapolis, MN 55411; Mayo Clinic Kidney-Pancreas Transplant Program, Attn: Department of Development, 200 1st Street SW, Rochester, MN 55905; Children's Dental Services, 636 Broadway St. NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413. Please note on all memorials/ donations "In memory of John McKay Williams."