



William Jennings "Bill" Harper

July 3, 1924 - November 4, 2017

William Jennings "Bill" Harper, of East Bank, WV died peacefully Saturday, November 4, 2017 at his daughter's home in Scott Depot, WV.

Bill was born July 3, 1924 in Crabb Orchard, WV a son of the late Hubert and Oney Lilly Harper and later moved to Powellton, WV. In addition to his parents, he was also preceded in death by his wife of 57 years, Thelma; sisters, Helen Miller and Neddie Bean.

As a young boy on Powellton, Bill fixed his Dad's watch. After his Dad bragged on him for doing so, Bill started "repairing" other people's watches for 50 cents. Then, while in the Navy and on the ship, his mainspring broke in his own watch. A fellow serviceman offered his own watch which Bill used as parts for his repair. He even made the small screwdriver necessary to fix the watch.

After leaving the Navy, Bill was on his way to Beckley to look for a job. His mainspring broke again, so he went into Mac's Jewelry Store in Montgomery to get the part. After Mac told him it would be six weeks to get it done, Bill asked Mac to sell him the part and he would put it in. Mac then told Bill that if he could sit there and put it in, he would hire him. That started Bill's career as a jeweler.

In the middle of the 1950's, Bill moved his family to Pineville, WV and went to work for a wholesale jeweler there. Bill worked there about a year and the store was sold. He then went to work for the new owners in Welch, WV. He started his own store, Harper's Jewelry, in his residence on Main Street in Pineville. To take care of his family, Bill also had a dry cleaning pickup service and his Justice of the Peace office in the same residence.

In 1966, Bill got word that Mac, of Mac's Jewelry, was sick and wanted him to come back and work for him. So, Bill moved his family to Montgomery. After Mac passed away, Bill eventually bought the store and changed the name to Harper's Jewelry. Bill and Thelma ran that store. Then the opportunity came to start a store in Summersville. So, they opened that store in the 1970's. He had already bought property that they used as a "get-away". So, Bill and Thelma bought a house in Summersville and ran that store, leaving his sons to run the Montgomery store.

Then opportunity came again in the early 1980's to open a store in Quincy Mall, Belle, WV. So, having one son in Montgomery and one son in Summersville, Bill and Thelma moved to East Bank and ran the store Belle store. After much thought, the other two stores eventually closed. Before Thelma passed away, they sold the Belle store to their daughter, Rose and her husband, Alan. They ran the store until it closed in 2006. Bill lost his beloved wife in July, 2001. After that he continued to do watch repair work until the Belle store closed. He then spent his days doing watch and clock repair at home.

Bill spent his time at the "camp" in Summersville and at home. He did get to spend some time with his daughter, Kay and her husband, Jim in Florida and took several Florida vacations with his daughter Rose and her husband, Alan.

William is survived by his sister, Lillian Miller of Garland, Texas; children, J.

David Harper (Linda) of Pooler, GA, William Daniel Harper (Kelly) of Charleston, WV, Rose Maddox (Alan) of Scott Depot, WV, Kay Evans (Jim) of High Springs, FL. He leaves behind eight grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and 8 great-great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 1pm Wednesday, November 8, 2017 at Witcher Baptist Church, Belle, WV where friends may begin gathering after 12 Noon. Bill donated his body to West Virginia University, so there will be no viewing. You may also visit his tribute page at ChapmanFuneralHomes.com to share your memories of Bill.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to either Witcher Baptist Church, 2206 East Dupont Avenue, Belle, WV 25015 or to Hospice Care, 1606 Kanawha Blvd., West, Charleston, WV 25387.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

NOV 8. 1:00 PM (ET)

Witcher Baptist Church
2206 East Dupont Avenue
Belle, WV 25015

Tribute Wall



“ *William Jennings "Bill" Harper*

October 06, 2023 at 08:41 AM



“ *Sam and Christie Rider Smith purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of William Jennings "Bill" Harper.*



Sam and Christie Rider Smith - November 08, 2017 at 10:44 AM



“ *David, Danny, Rose and Kay,
I have so many great memories of spending time at your house and attending church with your family at Cook Memorial. Your parents were very dear friends that I will never forget. Thelma and I were counselors together at Camp Cowen, and what a time we had. They hold a special place in my heart. I pray for God to surround each of you with his arms of love and comfort and give you his peace in the days ahead.
Love you,
Donna (Beckelhimer) Canterbury*

Donna Canterbury - November 07, 2017 at 01:00 AM

LH

“ I hadn't known Mr. Harper that long met him at McDonalds in Quincy. Also went to church with him for a short while. He was such a kind gentlemen and I really enjoyed the conversations we had on numerous occasions. His friends at McDonalds will truly miss him.

LOIS CAROL HORAN - November 06, 2017 at 07:25 PM

CG

“ David, Danny, Rose and Kay,
Your father was one of those men who personified the word "gentleman". I was not aware that your Mother had passed away. I have many fond memories of your family and you are all in my prayers. Blessings to you all.

Charles Gonano - November 06, 2017 at 09:45 AM



“ *May the love of God surround you and your family during this difficult time,
May you come to know that the love of God is with you always,

May your memories of William Jennings Harper, give you peace, comfort and strength...

Rest now in the arms of our Lord your mission on earth is complete. I thank you for your service to our Country and my Freedom. You will not be forgotten..
My thoughts
and prayers to the family of

US Navy Veteran, William Jennings Harper, is “A True American Hero” God Bless†

† Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13 †*

Cheryl Skinner, Tri-state Military Museum - November 06, 2017 at 07:31 AM

LM

“ *So many memories surrounding this family. Fishing or playing baseball at the house, attending church together. You will be in our prayers.*

leslie mullens - November 05, 2017 at 08:27 PM