



William J. "Bill" Crist

October 11, 1935 - February 6, 2020

William J. Crist, 84 of Decatur Illinois, passed away peacefully on February 6, 2020 at 8:35 p.m. with his children at his side.

Bill was born on October 11, 1935 in Mattoon, IL to William Frank Crist and Pauline Harriett (Sparks) Crist. He was raised in Decatur, IL and attended Durfee Elementary School, Centennial Jr High School and graduated from Decatur High in 1954 where was a trombone player in the school's marching band.

He married Judith Ann Bentz in April of 1958 and they had 3 children, Crystal M (Crist) Ilsley, Cameron Michael Crist and Clayton Miles Crist. They later divorced.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, grandparents, 1 child, Clayton Miles Crist, and 2 great-grandchildren, Ashley Crist and Autumn Crist, and a son-in-law Eric R Ilsley

He is survived by his children Crystal (Crist) Ilsley of Springfield, Cameron (Bunny) Crist of Decatur, a sister Janice (Ronald) Likins of Cerro Gordo, grandchildren Megan Ilsley (fiancée Brian Koch) of Springfield, Desirae Crist of Decatur, Devin (Megan) Crist of Kona, HI, Zephaniah (Tori) Crist of Decatur, a niece Angie Likins of Latham, IL, a nephew, Dennis (Michelle) Likins of Lovington, IL, 7 great-grandchildren, 5 great nieces and nephews and 3 great-great nieces and nephews.

Through out the summer during his senior year of high school and post graduation, Bill worked building houses for Don Wilkerson, and in 1954 was hired by the Wabash Railroad. When he retired in 1996 after 42 years of service, it was the Norfolk Southern Railroad and he started as a messenger in the yards and ended as a clerk in Materials Management. He was also one of the many railroad workers manning the phones after the explosion in 1974.

Bill was a member of the Juvae Jazz Society and became a member of MENSA in 1984. One of his favourite things to say to his kids and grandkids was "that's so dumb", or "everybody knows that, you dumb kid." It was all in fun, and that is one memory that is shared by all the generations.

The family would like to thank his doctors, Dr. Velasco of the Cancer Care Institute, Dr. Kollaru, cardiologist, Dr. Dawood, nephrologist, and the staff at the Wabash Hospital. We would also like to thank the staff in the intensive care unit at Decatur Memorial Hospital and the nursing staff who cared for him on floor 3500 his final two days. They provided

excellent care, both to him and to our family and we appreciate your kindness very much. He will be missed by us all.

Visitation will be Saturday, February 15, 2020, from 10 am until the service time of 11 am at Graceland/Fairlawn Funeral Home. Burial will follow in Graceland Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Juvae Jazz Society in Decatur, IL or the American Cancer Society.

“He who laughs last is a fool for waiting so long” Bill Crist, high school yearbook quote.

Cemetery

Graceland Cemetery

2091 N. Oakland Avenue
Decatur, IL, 62526

Events

FEB **Visitation** 10:00AM - 11:00AM

15

Graceland Fairlawn Funeral Home
2091 N. Oakland Avenue, Decatur, IL, US, 62526

FEB **Funeral Service** 11:00AM

15

Graceland/Fairlawn Funeral Home
2091 N. Oakland Ave., Decatur, IL, US, 62526

Comments



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February 19 at 03:54 PM



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I will miss my Daddy-in-law. It's funny how our relationship was. I called him Mr. Crist for years. Then when my youngest son was born I began calling him Bill. Then one day I switched to Dad and it stayed until I started calling him my Daddy-in-law. But all the years, he always called me daughter and referred to himself as Dad to me. These last few months I got even closer to him. I will miss him deeply. I love you Daddy-in-law.

Bunny - February 10 at 01:06 PM



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I worked with Bill when he was a messenger at the railroad. I always appreciated his kindness. Many nights I worked in the basement of the Condit street building in the freight office alone. Bill would make an extra trip to ensure I was OK. He was a good man.

Linda Patton - February 09 at 12:46 PM



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Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of William J. "Bill" Crist.



February 08 at 09:52 AM