



William Emmett "Bill" Austin

May 2, 1942 - October 14, 2023

William Emmett ("Bill") Austin, age 81, peacefully stepped from this world into the presence of his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on October 14, 2023, surrounded by his family. Bill was born May 2, 1942, to Reverend James Herbert (J.H.) and Lois Austin, the youngest of their five (5) children. He graduated from Lewis County High School in 1960. Following in the footsteps of his older brothers and brother-in-law, at age nineteen (19) he enlisted in the United States Air Force, serving four (4) years and nine (9) months at Barksdale Air Force Base in Bossier Parish, Louisiana, and Andersen Air Force Base in the United States Territory of Guam. In 1964, while attending camp meeting at the Pentecostal Campground in Perryville, Tennessee, Bill met Ruth Ann Douglas. He knew immediately he would marry her, and told her so, but she was skeptical. After a five (5) year courtship during his military service, he convinced her he was right and they were married on August 17, 1969.

Upon honorary discharge from the Air Force, Bill took advantage of the GI Bill and enrolled at Jackson State Community College, and later graduated from Lambuth College with a Bachelor's degree in psychology and sociology. He served his community in many ways. He was a twenty-five (25) year employee of the Department of Children's Services, initially investigating child abuse and later training foster families to provide stable homes for children in crisis. He also donated his time to prisoners who were part of "Do Not Follow Me," a group that warned adolescents of the dangers of addiction and

violence, including actively advocating for their parole upon being rehabilitated. He was President of the local chapter of Parents Against Drug Abuse (PADA), as well as, the Tennessee State Employees Association (TSEA). Local business owners may recall Bill making the rounds each year collecting funds so that children in foster care could have a better Christmas. All of these acts, and many more too numerous to list, reflect his heart for others and, in turn, for Jesus.

In addition to his primary vocation, Bill was a farmer that tended to Ruth Ann's ancestral farms in Wildersville, Tennessee. For approximately fifty (50) years, he stewarded the land and raised beef cattle, first with his father-in-law, N.R. Douglas, and later with his beloved son-in-law, Michael Thorne. In his spare time, he was an avid Memphis Grizzlies and Tennessee Titans fan.

Bill leaves behind Ruth Ann, his wife of fifty-four (54) years; his only child, Leanne Thorne and son-in-law, Michael; his brothers, Joel Austin (Melba) and Titus Austin (Pat); his sister Sue Hughey (Kenneth); nieces, Kathi Darlene Moreland (John) and Mitzi Ayers; nephews, Victor Austin (Suzie), Keith Austin (Jennifer), and Ken Hughey Jr.; a host of great nieces and nephews; and beloved "bonus family," including Stephanie, Deborah, and Leon Thorne, Margaret Milam, Jeff Cavness, Nancy Cavness, and their sons Jarrett and Nathan. He is preceded in death by his parents and his oldest sister Mary Elizabeth "Boots" Mosely, and her husband, Hubert. Funeral services will be on Tuesday, October 17 at 11AM at Reed's Chapel with burial to follow in Poplar Corner Pentecostal Church Cemetery. Visitation will be on Monday from 11AM-6PM and Tuesday from 9AM until service. As an alternative to flowers, donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital <http://raise.stjude.org/fundraiser/5041451> or the Poplar Corner Pentecostal Church cemetery fund, in care of Carl Bartholomew.

Tribute Wall

RS

“ Prayers love and hugs to you Ruth Ann and your family!



Rhonda Sanders - October 20, 2023 at 10:46 AM

DB

“ I am so sorry to learn of your loss. May your sweet memories bring you comfort.
Sincerely
Dian Helms Brown

Dian H Brown - October 19, 2023 at 09:21 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of William Emmett "Bill" Austin.



October 16, 2023 at 01:04 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of William Emmett "Bill" Austin.



October 16, 2023 at 10:42 AM

CP

“ Charlotte Pruett lit a candle in memory of William Emmett "Bill" Austin



Charlotte Pruett - October 16, 2023 at 10:31 AM

NW

So sorry for your loss. I worked with Bill many years at DCS . You are all in my thoughts and prayers.

Norma Wallace - October 16, 2023 at 10:32 PM

DH

“ Darlene Hatchet lit a candle in memory of William Emmett "Bill" Austin



Darlene hatchet - October 16, 2023 at 10:28 AM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of William Emmett "Bill" Austin.



October 16, 2023 at 09:49 AM

EA

“ Eddie & Lori Akins lit a candle in memory of William Emmett "Bill" Austin



Eddie & Lori Akins - October 15, 2023 at 11:51 PM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of William Emmett "Bill" Austin.



October 15, 2023 at 11:23 PM

CW

“ The family is in my thoughts and prayers at this time. Deepest condolences. 🙏💛



Christy W. - October 15, 2023 at 10:57 PM

PW

“ Peggy Wentworth lit a candle in memory of William Emmett "Bill" Austin



Peggy Wentworth - October 15, 2023 at 04:31 PM

PW

Prayers for your family, especially Leanne and Ruth Ann. We have talked many times about the power of God and you know he will give you comfort! Love, Peggy

Peggy Wentworth - October 15, 2023 at 04:33 PM

NW

So sorry for your loss. I worked with Bill many years at DCS. Great friend and coworker. You are all in my thoughts and prayers.

Norma Wallace - October 17, 2023 at 09:58 AM