



## William 'Bill' Kildee

September 2, 2010

TRAVERSE CITY — William F. "Bill" Kildee, of Traverse City, passed away on Sept. 2, 2010, surrounded by four of his loving children, at Grand Traverse Pavilions. William Frederick Kildee was born Jan. 31, 1923, to William T. and Delcia (Blaine) Hickey-Kildee in Traverse City. In 1980 he married his beautiful and loving wife, Virginia "Ginny" Setchfield (Becsey), who sadly preceded him in death in 1999. Bill volunteered and served in the U.S. Army during World War II from 1943 to 1945. He was as mine sweeper and fought in three WWII amphibious invasions (N. Africa, Sicily and Italy). He also fought in four historic WWII battles, including the battle of Cassino. He was wounded in battle and received many medals, with the Bronze Star for bravery and valor being one of the most treasured of his life's honors. He was extremely proud to have served his country and throughout his years shared many stories with family and friends about his years served in battle. Bill was a lifelong member of the Saint Francis Parish. He was elected president of his senior class and graduated from St. Francis High School in 1942. Following graduation Bill volunteered for enlistment in the U.S. Army. Upon his return home, he worked for 18 years at the Traverse City State Hospital. Bill moved his family to Mt. Pleasant, where he worked as a counselor for the Michigan Job Training Center. An opportunity arose for him to return to Traverse City, and he and his ex-wife, Jane purchased and operated the Cradle to Teen Shop in downtown Traverse City. Bill was a charter member and past president of the Traverse City Rotary Club. He and the late Preston Tanis also came up the idea to form what is now known as the Rotary Charities Inc. Bill was a former president for the Downtown Development Authority and during his time planted trees along the sidewalks of Front Street. He was a charter member and past president of the GTAC Board of Education (1973-1974). It has been recognized that Bill's negotiating skills helped insure that our Catholic schools would remain open by helping to design and implement the "dual enrollment" contract established in the 1970s. Bill played a leadership role in different fund drives for Munson Medical Center and Traverse City Osteopathic Hospital. Bill also cochaired with his daughter, Susanne, the Traverse City Chamber's Drug and Alcohol Addiction Committee and also served on the Chamber's membership committee. In 2009 Bill was honored by being a recipient of the St. Francis' Distinguished Alumni award. Bill was a proud member of AA and his influence helped many people gain

sobriety and a meaningful new life. After his retirement some of Bill's favorite pastimes were daily coffee downtown at Stacey's with the "good 'ole boys", visiting his children, attending St. Francis sporting events and acrylic painting. From 1949 to 1978, Bill and his partner, Wally Campbell entertained thousands of audiences with their "Willy and Wally" comedy team. They performed throughout the state for hundreds of conventions and delighted the locals in the annual Traverse City Rotary Minstrel Show for over 25 years. They were especially honored to perform the roast for U.S. Senator Robert "Bob" Griffin held in Washington, D.C. He is survived by his brother, Robert J. Kildee "Bob," of Camarillo, Calif., and was preceded in death by his other two brothers, Norman Hickey, of Traverse City, and Merlin Hickey, of Cadillac. Bill was the proud and loving father of his five surviving children, Susanne Janis (William), Patrick B. Kildee, Sandi Lindstrom (Jon), Lisa Lempke (Tim) and William T. Kildee (Molly). He was equally proud and loving of his blended family children, Jan Holt (Tim), John Becsey (Bekki), Jill Shattuck (Mark), Jim Becsey (Meme) and Jody Madion (Matthew). He was a kind and loving grandfather to Edward Janis, Heidi Kildee-Ovari (Zsolt), Sean Kildee, Jeremiah Johnson, Jane (Dan) Bezotte, Kurt (Jenny) Schmidt, Matthew and Jessica Lempke, Clinton and Mark Shattuck, Matt, Mark and Danny Madion, Laura and Andrew Holt, Jack, Jenna, Chase and Andrea Becsey, Joseph, Katherine and Robert, and soon to be born grandson, his namesake, William Frederick Kildee. His great-grandchildren are Paige and Quinton Austin, Landon and Katherine Schmidt, Chance and Keegan Kildee, Riggs and Clay Finch. He was preceded in death by his grandson, Daniel Johnson and granddaughter, Julie Janis Finch. Bill is also survived by several special cousins, nieces and nephews, from both the Flint and Camarillo, Calif., areas. The family wishes to extend their sincere and heartfelt gratitude to all the loving staff at Grand Traverse Pavilions; they were a supportive family to our father, and their love and kindnesses will never be forgotten. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2010, at noon, with visitation for friends and family beginning at 10 a.m., at St. Francis Church. Father Edwin Thome will officiate with Father John Grathwohl co-officiating. A luncheon at the church will follow Mass with his burial at Oakwood Catholic Cemetery following the luncheon. If you would like to make a memorial contribution in honor of Bill, please consider the Father Fred Foundation or the St. Francis Athletic Club. Please visit Bill's online guestbook at <http://www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com> to share your thoughts and memories with the family. The family is being served by Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home.