



William J. Ballard

June 30, 1929 - August 25, 2019

William J. Ballard

Traverse City, Michigan – William J. Ballard, Sr. age 90, of Lake Ann, Michigan passed away on Sunday, August 25, 2019 at Culver Meadows. Bill was born at home in Chambers County, AL on June 30, 1929 to Joseph Olney and Annie Mae (Clements) Ballard. He married Constance Helen McNulty on Feb. 23, 1952 in Columbia, South Carolina, they were married for 65 years.

Bill attended Opelika High School in Opelika, AL graduating in 1947. During high school, he was captain of the band, worked as a life guard, covered high school activities for the Opelika newspaper and joined the Junior Army ROTC. After graduation, he joined the Army, transferring to Alabama National Guard, to fulfill his military obligation. While attending Auburn Polytechnic Institute (Auburn University) graduating in 1954 with a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education. During this period, his unit was activated in December 1950. While activated he received the rank of master sergeant, realized he enjoyed organizing and teaching others.

Bill earned his Master's degree in Television from Syracuse University in 1955. Bill and his classmates ended up in the "Closed Circuit Educational Television" industry, a new frontier of television, later to become PBS. His professional career in public television started in 1955 at Auburn University. Bill came to Delta College before it even opened its doors in University Center, MI in 1961. While there he became director of television, station manager, and taught classes to the students of Delta's Channel 19 and was head of the broadcasting department. Mentoring students was his hobby and he wrote over 200 letters of recommendation. He retired in 1986. He described his broadcasting career of 32 years as exciting, stressful and varied but never dull.

He and his wife Connie were able to turn their hobby of collecting antiques, into a small antique business called Connie's Antiques in Honor and Wilson's in Traverse City for many years. He has been involved with the Rotary Club in Midland and Frankfort, active with WIAA at Interlochen and Dennon Museum. He and Connie were avid fans of the Old Town Playhouse, traveling the world and salmon fishing in Frankfort.

Bill adored his wife Connie, his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He was always a good listener, and was always talking to those around him whether it was his

legislator or the guy sweeping the floor.

Bill is survived by his children; William (Karen) Ballard, Laura (Steven) King, Charles Ballard, Madeleine Carey; 9 grandchildren, Andrew (Lauri) King, Zeb King, William (Andrea) Ballard III, Michael Ballard, Robert (Stephanie) Ballard, Melissa Ann Carey, Laura Constance Carey, Meghan Taylor and Alexa Hettwer; and 7 great-grandchildren, Colton and Sawyer King, Logan, Dalton and Payton King, Lucas and Dylan Ballard. Bill was preceded in death by his parents, 2 half-sisters, and 1 brother.

A celebration of Bill's life will take place at 3:00 pm on Friday, September 27, 2019 at Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home. A visitation for family and friends will begin one hour prior to the service. A reception will take place at the funeral home immediately following the service.

In lieu of flowers it was Bill's request that memorial contributions be directed to; Benzie Senior Resources, 10542 Main St, Honor, MI 49640 or American Legion Post 35, 1231 Hastings St, Traverse City, MI 49686.

Tribute Wall

AR

“ A Tribute from Andy Rapp

Delta Broadcasting has fortunately had some outstanding individuals who have all contributed mightily to its success, but none more so than William J. Ballard.

Bill was conservative, politically and personally, but he was also a visionary. He took a mostly sleepy closed-circuit, black and white television station to full broadcast and color. No easy undertaking. His vision wasn't just in the area of hardware; programmatically he encouraged and supported shows that just weren't done at a facility of our size. Face to Face, Day by Day, and PBS tie-ins on drugs and STDs are a sampling.

Ballard was "old school". I worked for him for ten years before he told me to call him Bill. Up to that point it was Mr. Ballard, done out of respect. He was a stern taskmaster, but he also could be much fun.

When "Mr. B" undertook something new he always found innovative ways to cover the costs rather than taxing the public, e.g., pledging, the auction, etc. He was a political being. He knew how to get things done, He taught me a lot.

We were from different worlds, the boss and me. He was a Southerner; I came from the East. He literally spoke a different language, most of which I understood, except when he had a couple of beers. Bill was a cowboy – really. I always enjoyed his tales of bull riding which by his good fortune led to him meeting his wife Connie.

I enjoyed connecting with the Ballard family and seeing the kids grow up. Over the years I had the pleasure of getting to know some of them quite well. An outstanding family - maybe his greatest success.

We are sad to see Bill go but celebrate his many great achievements. Unfortunately, we are away and will not be able to attend his service but those of us who had the privilege of working with or for him, we will carry his memorial always in our hearts.

Andersen Rapp - September 26, 2019 at 03:43 PM

CH

“ Constance Holder lit a candle in memory of William J. Ballard



Constance Holder - September 22, 2019 at 05:41 PM

CH

William J. Ballard was my Uncle. I was named after Constance Ballard, his wife. He was a moral compass in the family & set an example as to what a good man looked & acted like. He loved his wife, my Aunt Connie, and it showed. My cousins, his children, are an example of what good parenting is all about. They are all wonderful, responsible adults who are honorable & kind people.

Constance Holder - September 22, 2019 at 05:45 PM

SB

Billy and I were in school together and very close friends growing up. we were in the Class of 1947, in Opelika, Alabama.

Sam S. Bailey, Opelika,Al.

Sam Bailey - September 23, 2019 at 12:22 PM

BJ

I learned the broadcast business from Mr. Ballard in 1962 at Delta College. I went in to the retail record shop business in 1974 & at age 77, who would believe, the record business is booming again. Thanks, Mr. Ballard, for putting up with me. He was a wonderful teacher and a great human being.

Bill Wegner j - September 25, 2019 at 04:04 PM