



Willett "Bill" Harris

December 19, 1924 - July 8, 2019

Willett "Bill" Harris, age 94, of Bad Axe, passed away on Monday, July 8, 2019, at Courtney Manor of Bad Axe.

Willett was born December 19, 1924 in Verona Township, the third son of 12 living children of the late Fred and Edith (Mattice) Harris. He married Joyce Elaine Smith on August 25, 1951 in Detroit. They were married for 56 years and faced the adventures and tribulations of life, always together. Joyce preceded him in death on January 23, 2007.

Willett was a kind and loving man with a deep sense of wisdom. He was a good husband and father, always steady and calm. He was known as exceptionally strong in his youth and was a champ at hitting the Strongman bell at the Fair. He was a proud member of the Moose Club.

As a young man, he and his father walked into Bad Axe from Verona to paint and wallpaper homes. Then he worked for the Hebner Gravel Company, later working for Universal Engineering. When Universal closed, Willett and 16 other men were able to buy the factory, now named Huron Tool and Engineering. For several years they, as the stockholders, were able to reap the rewards of their labor before the factory was taken away from them.

In his earlier years, he was often quiet, but then would come out with a humorous joke that was so unexpected everyone was rolling on the floor. He had a gruff demeanor that made some adults wary at first until they got his warmth and humor, but babies were immediately drawn to him, not fooled for a moment. He was always a homebody and loved nature and growing flowers.

In his later years, many hours were spent watching birds and squirrels on his birdfeeder. He loved dogs and was often seen walking them.

Willett is survived by his daughter Marian Joycechild and her husband Craig Griffith, daughter-in-law Bonnie (Smith) Goretski and her husband Michael Goretski, his sisters Lucille Anderson and Gloria Cook, sisters-in-law Lee (Leonard) Harris and Dorothy (Charles) Harris, grandchildren Frank and Isabel Robles and five great-grandchildren as well as many nieces and nephews, including a special nephew, Larry Harris, now his dog "Cuddles" new "Papa".

Much love to Cheri Peyerk who was a friend and loving caregiver. Linda Birchfield and Julie Shuart are much appreciated who kept him engaged through games and conversation. Love to Tasha Robles for her care and all her home cooked meals. A special thanks to Courtney Manor employees who treated him as kindly as one of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Heartland Hospice if you wish. A celebration of his life will be held at Bad Axe First Presbyterian Church on Friday, July 12, 2019 at 11 am. Officiating will be Scott McDermand, pastor and Willett's nephew Pastor James Teasdale. Friends may call at the church for visitation from 10 am until the service time at 11 am.

Previous Events

Visitation

JUL 12. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Bad Axe First Presbyterian Church
112 Woodworth St.
Bad Axe, MI

Memorial Service

JUL 12. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Bad Axe First Presbyterian Church
112 Woodworth St.
Bad Axe, MI

Tribute Wall



“ *Willett "Bill" Harris*

January 28, 2023 at 01:32 PM



“ *It was nice to know Willie. He was one of our Mom and Dads favorite hunting partners. They used to also play cards together and Joyce used to bowl with our mom.*

Donna (Smith) Loeding - July 09, 2019 at 10:58 AM