



Willard (Bill) Robert Stillman

May 13, 1929 – October 6, 2017

*Devoted husband and father, professional engineer,
and always a woodsman at heart*

Willard (Bill) Robert Stillman passed away on October 6, 2017 after a short illness. He was born at home to Theodore and Minnie Stillman in Goodrich, Wisconsin on May 13, 1929. His mother passed away when he was three. After his father remarried, the family relocated to Riggins, Idaho where his father and uncle were partners in a steam-powered sawmill. When the mill failed, the family homesteaded a quarter section of timber on the Little Snake River, just south of Riggins. Bill and his father taught themselves the logging business, starting the operation with a team of horses and hand equipment, eventually moving to chainsaws, track-layers, and trucks. He graduated from Riggins High School in 1947, always proud to say that he was third in his class. Then with a smile, he would say there were only three in his class.

He was drafted into the Army during the Korean War and was part of an Army experiment to provide its own landing craft for amphibious assaults. He achieved the rank of Sergeant while piloting landing craft on Puget Sound. After completing his service, he worked as a jack-of-all-trades and migrant farm worker. In 1955 he decided to take advantage of the GI Bill. He attended San Jose State University and received a degree in Civil Engineering. While there, he met Ellen Yeaw at a SJSU basketball game. They were married on June 16, 1957 and recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

After his graduation from SJSU in 1959, Bill took a job as a Junior Engineer at the Sonoma County Water Agency. He remained at the Water Agency for his entire career, retiring as the Chief Engineer in 1991. During his tenure

at the Water Agency, he participated in the design and construction of many of the water and flood control projects that protect and sustain life in Sonoma County. He was well respected in his field and was honored as a Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

After his retirement, Bill enjoyed volunteering at the Sebastopol Senior Center where he gave instruction in computer technology. He especially loved his volunteer work with the Sturgeon's Mill Restoration Project and spent many weekends at this local historic mill, talking to visitors and reminiscing about his own days working in a sawmill and logging in the hills of northern Idaho. He liked nothing better than to break out his chainsaw and cut up fallen trees for firewood and continued this activity well into his eighties. Known for his quiet demeanor, patient determination, and backwoods brand of resourcefulness, Bill could almost miraculously fix anything with whatever was at hand. He read voraciously, almost always non-fiction, and passed on to his children his lifelong passion for learning.

Bill and Ellen have four children, and he passed along to them his strong work ethic and wonderful sense of humor. He is survived by his wife Ellen, siblings Mary Lou Uptmor, Ted Stillman, and Al Stillman, his children Carl (Stacey) Stillman, Chantal (Rolf) Frankenbach, Cordel (Ann) Stillman, and Tanya Stillman, as well as seven grandchildren: Chris, Julia, Kyra, Rowan, Rachel, R. Nathan, and Sofia. At his request, no services will be held. Donations in Bill's memory may be made to the Sturgeon's Mill Restoration Project, SturgeonsMill.org.