

rural Hiawatha , KS



Did ya heard about that ole guy in Northeast Kansas? What I mean is, he was a big teller of stories. And jokes. Mostly stories that turned out to be jokes. Now, he was never one to talk too much about himself. But here, we honor the story of his life.

William (Bill) Walter Howard believed in the good, lived a good life, and was one of the good. He recently shared with his family “All good things must come to an end.” He passed away at his home November 19, 2020 after a courageous battle with lung cancer. He was 78 years young.

Bill was born July 10, 1942 to William and Charlotte Howard. Growing up west of Hiawatha on the family farm provided a work ethic and life skills he always carried with him. Bill took seriously his job of looking out for his younger brother, Donnie. As time went on, Donnie got the chance to do the same for him. Three days after his 18th birthday he registered and joined the US National Guard. After three months, he returned home to support the family farm due to the sudden loss of his father. He continued farming most of his life.

In 1976 he found himself with repeated reasons to visit the Brown County Animal Clinic so he could spend more time with the new Vet Tech in town. Three months after meeting, he asked Bonnie Garwood to marry him. They were married in Atkinson, NE and celebrated at the Garwood Ranch on August 7, 1976.

Tractor time was spent practicing auctioning, leading to the development of Howard Auction Service. However, on Saturdays Bill was more than just an auctioneer. He became an entertainer. With a spark in his blue eyes, a mischievous grin, and the ability to make an entire crowd laugh with his witty remarks, he loved the challenge of selling new things to old friends and old things to new friends, serving families, and working with Bonnie and an incredible auction crew for over 35 years. In time he began selling all kinds of real estate with King Reality. He thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity of wearing a suit, serving Janice’s cinnamon rolls and selling farmland.

His biggest joy arrived in 1979—his daughter, Belinda. Together they conquered any obstacle as a team. You could find them disguised in Halloween Parades, bantering at an auction to provide

an extra smile or sharing a look that told 1000 stories. When she married Janvier in 2015, Bill gained a son, of whom he became so proud of.

And then in 2016, Bill stepped into his favorite role of all. He became “Grandpa” to Zander William. Ezekiel (Zeke-o as Grandpa called him) joined the team in 2017. They became his pride and joy and he was quick to share a story about them to anyone who would listen. They adored Grandpa and the feeling was beyond mutual. Azalee joined the family on October 7th, 2020 and Grandpa was grateful to welcome her home and spent several hours rocking his favorite granddaughter.

Bill was full of ambition and also had no desire to travel beyond the Fairview city limits. His love of his family landed him a passport and he found himself exploring more parts of the world than he ever imagined or needed! He was always ready to return home and get back to work. He claims he had two careers he “dearly loved” which were farming and Howard Auction Service, however we all know he had many more side gigs. He spent several years driving semi-trucks for King Trucking and moving furniture for Rieger Van Lines. He spent over 10 years of Thursday night’s working at the Hiawatha Sale Barn and endless days flipping Junk into Merchandise. He had a deep gift for seeing potential.

He led life with his huge heart and was diligent in cheering people on and meeting them where they were at. He was a generous man and always on the lookout for how to share his knack of hospitality. He didn’t know a stranger and was known to share an outrageous story or joke with anyone he met. He was a dreamer and always ideating new ways of doing things. He had a steel-vault memory, an incredible green thumb for a thriving garden and he made a mean batch of no-bake cookies. He loved animals and collecting collectibles. He was quick to acknowledge “the Good Lord” was always looking after us.

Bill would humbly acknowledge he had a good life, but those he leaves behind would say it was a grand life—and he leaves a grand legacy. “Well done good and faithful servant.”

Bill was preceded in death by his parents.

He is survived by his wife Bonnie and children Belinda (Janvier) Bassene. He passed on his love to each of his adored grandchildren, Zander, Zeke and Azalee.

He is also survived by his siblings Don (Mary) Howard, Sharon (Steve) Thompson, Linda Garwood, Dennis (Sandra) Garwood, Diane (Warren) Hull, Arden (Lynn) Garwood and Trudie (Alan) Van Horn and a bucket full of nieces and nephews along with his mother-in-law Maxine Garwood.

On Tuesday, November 24th the immediate family will be gathering at the funeral home for a ceremony celebrating Bill’s life at 10 AM. The service can be viewed on the Chapel Oaks Hiawatha & Highland Ks Facebook page. In addition, an Open House will be available to the community at the funeral home from 1-6 PM.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be sent to the funeral home to be designated later by the family.

Special thoughts or a story may be shared with the family at www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com