



Wilbur "Bill" Steele

February 11, 1926 - December 7, 2016

Wilbur Glenn (Bill) Steele died Dec. 7 at home in Fort Collins, Colorado.

He was born Feb. 11, 1926 in Hodgeman County, Kansas.

Bill's dad, Harry, owned a shop in Jetmore and Bill grew up learning about mechanics. He learned to repair tires and became the shop's go-to guy for tire problems. He developed the skill to repair any automobile, farm equipment or appliance.

Bill was in high school when Pearl Harbor was attacked and knew immediately that he would be joining the service and going to war. After graduation, he joined the Navy and was stationed on a destroyer escort in the south Pacific. Two years later, he stood on the deck of his ship with all his shipmates as American and Japanese officials met on the deck of the USS Missouri to sign surrender agreements, formally ending World War II.

After helping decommission his ship, he returned home to southwest Kansas, as did many friends. There they began the work of rebuilding a peacetime life.

He went to work in his dad's shop and married Irene I. Rankin on Dec. 29, 1947. They had two sons, Don and Kim.

When Harry sold the shop, Bill agreed to stay on a couple of weeks to help out the new owner. He helped out for 20 years.

In 1968, he took a job at the new anhydrous ammonia plant in Dodge City and worked in the maintenance department there until his retirement in 1988.

Bill and Irene enjoyed retired life until her death on May 4, 2000.

Bill married Bonnie Koontz Patchen on Sept. 10, 2001.

They moved to Branson, Missouri, where they enjoyed seeing all the shows, hosting guests and boating on the lake.

In 2014, they moved to a retirement community in Fort Collins, Colorado. Bill enjoyed playing pool and cards at the senior center and they both enjoyed being closer to family.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, Harry and Pearl; two brothers, Gene and Donnie; and a sister, Doris; his wife, Irene; her parents, Ted and Lula Rankin; and his youngest son, Kim.

He is survived by his wife, Bonnie; his brother, Duane, of Joplin, MO; his oldest son, Don and his partner, Darleen, of Dodge City, KS; his grandson, Tedd and three granddaughters, Jady, Sophia and Brooklyn of Aurora, IL; his step-daughters Linda Diehl (Sonny) of Fort Collins and Peggy Rinne (Bob) of Seattle, WA; step-sons Larry Patchen (Pat) of Springs, CO and Terry Patchen of Las Vegas, NV; five step-grandchildren, five step-great grandchildren.

A remembrance service will be held Saturday, Dec. 10 at 3 p.m. at the Fort Collins Senior Center. Gifts in lieu of flowers may be sent to the Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Rain Tree Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80526, marked Wilbur

Steele Memorial.

A memorial service and burial will take place at a later date in Jetmore, Kansas. Gifts in lieu of flowers at that time may be sent to the Post 290 Chester Hawkins American Legion, in care of Beckwith Funeral Home, PO Box 663, Jetmore, KS 67853, marked Wilbur Steele Memorial.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

DEC 10. 3:00 PM (MT)

Fort Collins Senior Center
1200 Raintree
Fort Collins, CO