

WILLIAM BEST



William Edward Best "Bill" passed away peacefully July 6, 2011 surrounded by his loving family. He was 82 years old. Bill was born in Barstow on December 11, 1928 to LaVera and Ed Best. He attended local elementary schools and graduated in 1947 from Barstow Union High School. Bill was hired at Santa Fe Railroad as an electrician apprentice.

In 1947 Bill married the love of his life Joan Horton. In 1949 they welcomed their first child, a son, Gary. Their beautiful daughter Leann was born in 1952.

Bill was a natural with electronics, so he went to work at the Marine Corps Logistics Base. During his career at MCLB he discovered and then corrected an error in complex wiring instructions for marine landing vehicles. If the error had gone undetected it would have caused an explosion and consequent destruction of lives and equipment. On May 23, 1961, Bill was awarded the Commendation for Superior Civilian Service to recognize his work in the prevention of the loss of human lives and government property. The award was presented by General H. Cloud and is the highest award a civilian can receive from the Navy. Bill was only the second civilian to receive this award. He also created artillery test equipment that was used in the Vietnam War. This creation was used by all four branches of the military. During the time he worked at the Goldstone Tracking Station, he was instrumental in tracking and sending signals to deep space Mariner 6.

A prankster by nature, Bill always had a good joke or story. In the 1950's his family was involved in jalopy racing. He raced with the Brands, Pappy Henry, Hank McGill, Joe Myers, Jimmy and Jerry Crisp, Denny Holland, Jessie Harris and Luther Friend, just to name a few. In the early 1960's the family enjoyed go-carting. Bill and Gary both raced carts, but Bill eventually became a mechanic for Gary, mentoring him to many wins. He also enjoyed metal detecting in conjunction with treasure hunting. He found a partial direction map of hidden treasure in Colorado. Bill and Joan enjoyed many vacations to fulfill his dream of finding the elusive treasure. He could build or adapt just about anything to make it work his way. Bill loved

rhythm, music and dancing. It was no surprise that he and Joan made beautiful music together on and off the dance floor for 52 years until her death on December 14, 2001. Kind, honest and hardworking, Bill was our last surviving parent. He was Dad, Grandpa and Father-in-law to all who loved him. We will cherish his memory forever.

Bill is preceded in death by his wife, Joan Best; mother, LaVera Carson; father, Ed Best; and brother, Harry Collett. Surviving Bill are his son Gary Best and his wife, Jamee; his daughter, Leann White and her husband, Colin; brothers, Burr Collett and his wife, Hazel, and Stanley Best; sister, Jane Parra; granddaughters, Laura Stankavich and her husband, Joel, and Cindy Best; and Bill's special companion of 9 years, Vivian Cline.

A memorial service for Bill will be held on Monday, July 18, 2011 at 11 a.m., at Mead Mortuary, 36930 Irwin Road. Donations in memory of Bill may be made to the Newberry Springs Senior Center, 33383 Newberry Road, Newberry Springs, CA 92365, or the VNA/Hospice, 222 E. Main St., Suite 112, Barstow, CA 92311. Please annotate Barstow on the check. Arrangements provided by Mead Mortuary, 760-256-5671.

Published in the Daily Press from July 15 to July 25, 2011