



William Barr

April 28, 1924 - November 2, 2010

William Ransom Barr - known variously as Bill, Gandpo and "That Lovable Ol' Coot" - was born on April 28, 1924, in Kansas City, Mo.

In 1930, he moved to Winslow, Ariz., with his mother and three siblings, to be closer to his extended family. It was here that he developed numerous ingenious but flightless aircraft, and created several groundbreaking yet unpublished comics. It is also claimed young Billy held the land-speed record for a gravitationally-assisted bicycular descent.

His large family was blessed with goodwill and great humor, and Depression-era Winslow became fodder for Bill's lifelong gift for charming and hilarious storytelling.

His family relocated in 1940 to San Bernardino, Calif., where he completed high school and began junior college. From 1943 to 1945, he served with the 11th Airborne Division of the U.S. Army, which stood as Gen. MacArthur's honor guard during the surrender of Japan.

Though his chief wartime duties consisted of playing poker, he was awarded a Bronze Star for his courage and level-headedness during combat. He was a gifted clarinetist and artist, and sent home many humorous cartoons depicting life in the armed forces.

Despite his affinity for Rube Goldberg, he completed his bachelor's degree in engineering at University of Southern California in 1952, on the G.I. Bill.

He married Norma J. Skidmore on Dec. 15, 1951, in Whittier, Calif., and began his lifelong career as a civil engineer for the Los Angeles County Flood

Control District.

He married Glenda M. Pierce on June 18, 1966, and worked happily until his retirement in January 1979.

He relocated to Corvallis in June 1982, and lived a blissful retirement, surrounded by his adoring daughters and grandchildren.

He spent many happy hours volunteering at The Arts Center and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.

Bill leaves a rich legacy of integrity, humor, kindness, honesty and whimsy. He was a gentleman, a great and humble man, absolutely devoted to his daughters and grandchildren; he touched the lives of all who knew him. A seat next to Bill was always the most coveted - whether to hear his tales more clearly, or simply to be warmed by the glow of his loving and gentle spirit. His antics at the dinner table will be missed.

He is survived by three daughters, Debra M. Brush of Tangent, and Jane E. Barr and Donna K. Meredith of Corvallis; by seven grandchildren, Kenrick Buchanan of Escondido, Calif., Amanda J. Vaughn of Salem, Nova R. McLaren of Stevenson Ranch, Calif., Hans K. Hlawaty of Santa Monica, Calif., Aurora D. Yarber of Albany, and Mary H. Brush and William D. Brush of Tangent; and by seven great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will take place at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 5, in the chapel of the Episcopal Church of the Good Samaritan. A reception will follow.