



William Lawrence Benson

November 4, 1916 - April 12, 2015

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William Lawrence Benson (Bill) was born on November 4, 1916, in a farmhouse near Stephen, Minnesota. He died on April 12, 2015, at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis.

He was a strong person, a giving person, a loving person. He was healthy and happy during all the 98 years he spent on this earth.

Bill was the second child of Frank and Olga Benson. He grew up during difficult economic times in a land of harsh winters. His values were formed close to the soil in a tightly knit Swedish Lutheran community. Hard work, honesty, loyalty, patience, prudence, sincerity and humility were values he learned at an early age and never forgot.

His large hands seemed to transmit those qualities with every firm handshake, which was the only kind of handshake he ever gave. People always will remember that.

After graduating from high school, where he excelled as both a student and an athlete, Bill worked for a time on the railroad and then as partner in a grocery store in Stephen. It was then that he met Lorraine Glasrud, a teacher at the

local high school, with whom he would form a beautiful marriage for 62 years. When duty called, Bill entered the U.S. Army.

During the war years he served at numerous bases around the country, the final one being Camp Adair, with the 104th Infantry Division (Timberwolves). He and Lorraine then realized that they wanted to spend the rest of their lives in Corvallis.

Corvallis and its people were important to Bill. For several decades he owned and operated a number of businesses, the best known of which was Jensen's (later Benson's) paint store on Second Street, now the site of American Dream Pizza. He was intensely and genuinely interested in helping his customers and would go to great lengths to assist them, including after hours and on weekends.

He was an active participant and leader in many business and community organizations. He immensely enjoyed working with friends and fellow citizens, and it showed. They honored him with important awards for community service, which he humbly accepted while always emphasizing that it was teamwork that made accomplishments possible.

For his work as a member of the Corvallis Chamber of Commerce, he received the Chamber Award for "Hours Spent Coordinating Development of Kermit Roth Gateway Park." In addition, he received the "George" Award in 1985 and again in 1990; the Helping Hand Award in 1987; the Chamber Appreciation Award in 1990; and the Chairman of the Board Award for 1992-93.

Bill was chairman of the Corvallis School Board from 1962-67, a longtime member of the Board of the Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation, and honorary trustee of that foundation beginning in 1988. He was an enthusiastic

supporter of Old Mill Center. He also rendered significant service to the Boys & Girls Club of Corvallis, the Kiwanis Club and the Benton County Historical Society.

He was a charter member of the Corvallis Ambassadors and the Corvallis Community Club, as well as a lifetime member of Corvallis Elks Lodge 1413. In 1988, Bill was selected Senior First Citizen of Corvallis.

Faith and church were an integral part of Bill's life. He was a practicing Lutheran who deeply believed in Christian values and teachings, expressing them through his actions in everyday situations as well as through substantial participation in Grace Lutheran Church.

He was instrumental in the growth of that church, supporting its spiritual mission as well as its projects for building and improvement to its physical facilities. In 1968 he served as building chairman for the construction of the present church.

As a proponent of virtually everything Oregon has to offer, Bill found it easy to be an enthusiastic Beaver fan. He was the complete fan, up to date on all Oregon State University sports happenings, and always ready to discuss results and hopes for the future.

He was a member of the Beaver Club, attended hundreds of games in person, and followed hundreds more on radio and TV. He was not an OSU alum, but most people must have thought otherwise.

Bill always was fascinated by the spectacular natural setting in which he lived: the fertile valley, the Cascades, the forests and the sea. He would never tire of looking at the ocean and walking in the sand. Family outings almost always

would end up close to Newport. During the first years in Oregon, Bill frequently fished for salmon, but later concentrated more on simply eating it.

He also enjoyed drinking Oregon wines on site at many picturesque Willamette Valley wineries. In his final years Bill became an advocate for Willamette Valley filberts. In early fall he would purchase several large sacks of those delicious nuts and then send boxes of them to family and friends from Alaska to Michigan.

Above all, Bill was a family person. He was a constant source of encouragement and wise counsel for his children and for their children, in addition to assisting them and comforting them in good times and in difficult moments. He was a very humble man, always showing kindness to those around him. He put others before himself.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Lorraine; and siblings Emmy Kruse, Gladys Halfmann and Arnold Benson. He is survived by his brother Harold Benson; sister Lucille Oligney; son John (Seidy); daughter Mary (Toney); six grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren. He loved them all. He will be greatly missed by these people, as well as by cousins, nieces and nephews, and his many friends.

Bill Benson was a man of God. Bill Benson was a good man.

A service will take place at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 2, at Grace Lutheran Church. You can leave your thoughts and/or condolences at www.demosduran.com.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be sent to the Grace Lutheran Church Foundation, 435 N.W. 21st St., Corvallis, OR 97330; or the Good Samaritan Hospital Foundation, 3600 N.W. Samaritan Drive, Corvallis, OR 97330.

Tribute Wall

KC

“ We were neighbors of the Bensons for many years. I just discovered that he had passed. Very sorry for your loss Mary but Bill had lived a long and full life and lived it well.

His obituary in the GT was very accurate, Bill Benson was one of the kindest, gentlest, and giving man I have ever met. I don't think there was a mean bone in his body. He, along with his dear wife Lorraine, will be missed.

Ken Condon

Ken Condon - July 25, 2015 at 01:22 PM

CL

“ Dear Mary and Toney,

Please accept my condolences concerning your father's passing. I am truly sorry for your loss.

I did not know your father well, but I do recall that he always smiled at me and treated me with kindness. I was proud to tell people that my dad worked at Benson's because of the stellar reputation Bill and Harold had built at their business. I remember filling one-gallon glass jugs with paint thinner in the basement at 214 South 2nd and getting paid 25 cents a bottle. (With all the smoking of cigarettes going on back then, it is a wonder they didn't blow the place up!) But my fondest memory of Benson's is of my sister, Janis, and I when we dressed up as the Dutch Boy paint kids at the Corvallis Centennial Celebration in 1957.

I believe it was because of the influence of your dad that my parents began attending Grace Lutheran Church and that I became an acolyte there. I still have the photo of our confirmation class, which included you and I and Terry Wheeler, who became one of my very best friends.

I hope that with the passage of time, the sadness you must now feel will be replaced by happy memories. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Peace and love to you both.

Craig Leavy

Hopi Prayer

Do not stand at my grave and weep. ?I am not there. I do not sleep.? I am a thousand winds that blow,? I am the diamond glints on snow.? I am the sunlight on ripened grain,? I am the gentle autumn rain.? When you awake in the morning's hush?, I am the swift uplifting rush of quiet birds in circled flight. ? I am the soft star-

shine at night. ? Do not stand at my grave and cry. ?I am not there. I did not die.

Craig Leavy - May 02, 2015 at 12:22 PM

NA

“ *I will turn home at last once more
Knowing that a true soldier's rest
Once earned is sweet
His peace complete
Who gave until the last his best*

National Timberwolf Pups Association

National Timberwolf Pups Association - April 24, 2015 at 06:59 PM

KP

“ *Sorry to hear of Bill's passing. He will be missed in our lives, a kinder man we have never met. We met Bill thru the Chamber of Commerce, many years ago. With great affection. Vera and Kim Phillips*

Kim Phillips - April 23, 2015 at 03:05 PM