

## **William "Bill" Ballou,**

January 7, 1941 – October 4, 2024



William (Bill) Ballou entered his eternal home with Jesus surrounded by family on October 4, 2024, in Murrieta, California from complications from cancer. Bill lived an energetic life dedicated to his family, faith in God and community. He brought a smile, humor and a story to all those who he encountered.

Bill was born on January 7, 1941, on the family farm near Hetland, SD. He grew up on the farm before moving with his family to Rapid City, South Dakota in 1955. After a young adult life with a variety of jobs from Western Union to the Billy Graham Association, he found himself in upstate New York working at Word of Life in Schroon Lake. It was there in 1970 that he met his wife, Ila Boilesen. They married on January 1, 1971.

They moved to Kearney, Nebraska in 1974 to own and operate The Solid Rock Christian books and gifts store, which they owned for 45 years. The store was not just a business; it was a bedrock of the Kearney business community and the larger Christian community in central Nebraska and surrounding areas. Bill's warmth and kindness made everyone feel welcome, greeting everyone by name and, if you were lucky, a yo-yo trick, a snuggle with their dog Rocko or a funnel cake.

Bill was also deeply committed to charitable work. He loved connecting ideas and plans to people and resources. Bill was active in Rotary International, where he held several leadership roles, including District Governor for Western Nebraska. His work in Rotary enabled him to support initiatives that impacted local and global communities, including Shelterbox, Alliance for Smiles, Water 4 Haiti and Operation Pollination. He supported the initiatives through travel around the globe to learn more about the organizations, then returning to fundraise and speak on behalf of them. His efforts earned him the Service Above Self award from Rotary International in 2008.

He was one of the founding members of the Kearney Area Habitat for Humanity chapter. Some of the other organizations that he was involved with included Gideons, Himanchal Education Foundation and Shepherd's College. He was also active in his local church wherever he lived, serving in various capacities. From his time in Kearney to his move to Chicago and then Murrieta, he found great joy in attending and participating in Bible study groups.

His other favorite activities included walking, playing billiards, watching Nebraska sports and good food.

Bill is survived by his wife, Ila Ballou, with whom he shared 53 adventurous and travel-filled years of marriage. He is also survived by their three children: Carmin Ballou (John Liebert) of Chicago, Aaron Ballou of Murrieta, California, and Isaac Ballou of Port Angeles, Washington and 5 grandchildren, Reese, Addison, Hannah, Samuel and Josiah (Joey). He is also survived by 2 brothers, Charles and Vernon, and 1 sister, Verlyn. He is preceded in death by his parents and his 2 brothers, Richard (Dick) and Caron.

Ever a supporter of education and life-long learning, Bill requested that his well-worn body be donated to UC-San Diego School of Medicine.

Celebrations of Bill's life are tentatively scheduled for October 26th in Murrieta and November 9th in Kearney, where friends and family will be invited to share their memories and stories of Bill's life.

For those wishing to honor Bill with a donation, the family asks that they be directed in Bill's memory to one of his favorite charities, including the Polio Plus Fund of Rotary International, Shepherd's College, Himachel Foundation or Lily Kelly in Murrieta.