



William "Bill" Thomas

January 15, 1927 - February 1, 2015

Lifelong Siskiyou County resident, William Ream Thomas passed away on February 1, 2015 at the Madrone Hospice House in Yreka at the age of 88. Better known as "Bill the Bread Man," he was a third generation Yrekan, born on his family's dairy farm just south of the fairgrounds to William and Edna Thomas on January 15, 1927.

Bill walked the one mile to attend the one room Greenhorn School House, and then graduated from Yreka High School in 1945 as the Senior Athletic Director. He played football and baseball. He joined the Navy in December of 1944, and was stationed at Treasure Island, San Francisco until after WWII in 1946. Bill returned to Yreka and worked for Safeway, Coca-Cola, Pacific-Fruit, Cooley & Pollard, Copco Power Co., and finally Williams Bread for 23 years as a delivery-man.

In 1949, Bill married Wanda (Killingsworth) Beseltin. He adopted her son, and they had four children. Bill enjoyed golfing, bowling, playing baseball for Jolly's, and was an avid sportsman, enjoying hunting and fishing. Bill coached Little League for 12 years for his 3 sons, and served 20 years as a volunteer Yreka fireman. He was a life member (of 57 years) of the Yreka Elks Lodge. Bill loved gardening, and sharing the produce from his garden.

In 1980, Bill moved to Fort Jones to be with his companion, and future wife,

Julia (Williams) Erickson. They traveled extensively throughout the world. Bill retired in 1988 from the bread route and delivered the Siskiyou Daily News for 2 years, and then worked at the Fort Jones Cemetery. He was most proud of always having a job.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents and three sons: Michael, Billy, and John; his step-son, David Erickson; and his beloved dog, BJ. He is survived by his wife, Julia; his older sisters, Willa Hudson, Laura Roberts, and Mary Freeman; his daughters, Christyne Richardson, Stacy (Wayne) Brown; step-son, Robin (Ellen) Erickson; step-daughters, Laurel (John) Lovett and Crystal Arnot; 24 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

A memorial potluck will be held Sunday, February 8, 2015, at 1:00 p.m., at the Fort Jones Elementary School on Mathews Street in Fort Jones. In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations to be made to your favorite Volunteer Fire Department.

Previous Events

Memorial Potluck Gathering

FEB 8. 1:00 PM (PT)

Fort Jones Elementary School
Mathews Street
Fort Jones, CA 96032

Tribute Wall

KO

“ Even though it had been a long time since I have seen Bill, I will miss him very much. I have memories of my family spending allot of time with the Thomas family on holidays and during summer as a child. One vivid memory I do have is Bill at the Jackson Street school carnival making cotton candy, actually covered with cotton candy. He always gave great hugs.

Kathy On - February 19, 2015 at 01:50 PM

KW

“ Scott, Michele, and I will never forget the love and kindness Grandpa Bill always extended to us. Bill made friends of everyone he met and will be remembered for his generosity and all the voluntary contributions he made over the years to his community. I am proud to have been once his daughter-in-law, and the mother of two of his wonderful grandchildren. We will miss him.
Sincerely,
Scott Thomas, Michele Thomas, and Karen Thomas-Wyatt

Karen Wyatt - February 06, 2015 at 07:44 PM

HM

“ Uncle Bill the Williams Bread Man. I am glad that I had you as a part of my family. You made us richer because you were there.

Helen Morehouse - February 05, 2015 at 12:21 PM