

William Gripman OBITUARY

William S. Gripman. Sr. of Highlands Ranch, and formerly Parker, passed away on 21 October after a short illness. Bill was born in Detroit, Michigan at the beginning of the Great Depression. He carried the depression experience his whole life, always careful to live below his means. Bill attended the University of Michigan on the Holloway Plan, a post-war program to train Naval officers. On the morning of his graduation, he was also commissioned as an Ensign in the Navy and later that afternoon married the woman who would be his wife and helpmate for 64 years, Nancy Carol Williams. Together, they raised a family, John B (Deborah) of Raleigh NC, Suzanne Pletcher (Tim) of Ukiah CA, William, Jr. (Kathleen) of Canton MI and Thomas H. of Panama (Jacqui). Bill had 6 grandchildren, Jorie of Charleston SC, Leigh of Pueblo CO, William III of Pensacola FL, Margaret of Canton MI, Samuel of New York City and Joshua of Chicago, and 5 great grandchildren.

After serving in the Navy during the Korean War, Bill embarked on a successful business career. His work took him to many states and the children grew up in New Jersey, Illinois, Florida, Indiana, and Massachusetts. Bill's big break came in 1962 when he was hired away from the Caterpillar Tractor Co. to Cummins Engine Co. to expand Cummins' engine offerings beyond heavy truck engines. He pioneered their expansion into large diesel-powered generator sets and in short order was made a vice-president in the company. He and a partner then purchased a Cummins dealership in the Boston area and ran that successfully until the late 1970s, when they sold it and he moved to Colorado to become vice-president of sales and marketing for the Wagner Equipment Co. of Denver. He retired from Wagner in 1995.

Every year while his children were growing, Bill took them on a 2-week vacation. Always driving, always camping and each year to a different part of the country. There was a collective sigh of relief in 1968 when he finally bought a station wagon with air conditioning. It was great fun for the children to see their hard-working and serious father start to unwind in the front seat of the car as they started the annual excursion. This came primarily in the form of "dad jokes," as they came to be known. Bill may have invented the genre, we don't know. He was certainly an early adopter.

After retirement Bill and Nancy took to performing good works. They went on mission trips bringing school and uniform supplies to children in Cambodia and he joined the International Executive Service Corps and assisted companies in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union with western-style marketing plans for their various businesses. He also performed consulting work for Caterpillar in places such as Mongolia. After Nancy's passing in 2015, he traveled as much as possible with his loving companion, Eleanor Moller. He was a five-time awardee of the Paul Harris Award, available to members of Rotary International. He was a long-time member of the Parker United Methodist Church and sang tenor in the choir for many years. Upon moving to Highlands Ranch, he affiliated with St. Andrews United Methodist Church.

A funeral service will be held at St. Andrews on 9 November at 10:00 a.m., and interment will be Kinderhook MI.

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