



William "Billy" Moore Mitchell, Jr.

November 14, 1920 - January 22, 2013

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William Moore Mitchell, Jr., 92, of Morrilton, passed away January 22, 2013. He was born November 14, 1920 to William Moore Mitchell Sr. and Mary Hemphill Mitchell and became a lifelong resident of Morrilton. Billy attended Hendrix College and graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1942 with a

BS in Agriculture. At the university he was a member of Kappa Sigma. He spoke fondly of those years and his ability of not letting classes interfere with his education. He especially enjoyed the school dances which frequently featured the famous big bands of that era. He often regaled his family with tales of trips to Fayetteville in his Model A Ford with at least one person freezing in the open rumble seat.

As with many young men of that era, Billy was fascinated with flight. Money was hard to come by in the thirties but whenever he could he would pay for flying lessons at nearby airfields including Adams Field in Little Rock. When WWII began he enlisted and joined the Army Air Corps. His instructor knew that Billy had more training than most of the new recruits and asked him to take each of the newly minted pilots for a test flight to get a second opinion as to their readiness to fly or as the instructor put it, their likelihood to make it back to base on their first flight. It was on the way to deployment in the Pacific theatre that Billy contracted polio. He spent the rest of the war in the Army and Navy Hospital in Hot Springs. Aided by an iron will inherited from his mother he recovered from the paralysis.

Back home in Conway County where his reputation was "just another good boy who fell for the weaker sex", Billy was struck one day by a vision of beauty coming out of a restaurant. He wangled an introduction to "that cute girl". Courtship followed and on March 29, 1946 Marie Pledger and William M. Mitchell, Jr. were married and settled down in Morrilton. Billy went right to work building a home for his wife and himself where they raised their family and lived their lives. His sixty-six year marriage to his lifelong sweetheart, Marie, ended with her death on January 7, 2013 and he was ready to rejoin her.

Billy was a partner with his father in E E Mitchell Company (later changed to the Mitchell Company), a furniture and hardware store in Morrilton. He was active in civic affairs as a charter member of the Morrilton Lions Club and president of the Morrilton Country Club. He became a member of the board of stewards of the Methodist Church. In 1956 he took over the family farm, Paw

Paw Bend, at the foot of Petit Jean Mountain. He farmed along with his right-hand man and extended family member, Herbert (Sonny) Jackson until retiring in the late 80s. In 1965 Billy, his wife and daughters were selected as Farm Family of the Year for Conway County. Billy served on the board of the Farm Bureau of Conway County and at the state level where he set the record as the longest serving board member of the Arkansas Farm Bureau. He also served for seven years on the Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission and was active in the Arkansas Cattleman's Association.

Informally "Mr. Bill" was a member of coffee gatherings of other farmers and friends that met in the morning at different times and in different locations over the years. Some of the best stories, jokes, and "lies" were exchanged at these meetings and it was certainly where Billy kept up with local news and enjoyed lots of good laughter. Once a week, after cutting the grass around his home in Morrilton, he would ride his mower to the nearby First United Methodist Church and mow there as well.

Billy and Marie loved to travel; one of the things he liked the most about their adventures in one of their travel trailers was to meet new people. One of his quotes was "there are an awfully lot of really nice people out there". But then Billy never met a stranger and could strike up a conversation with just about anybody swapping stories of past and present adventures.

Advancing years brought difficulties for Billy. While he credited polio with saving his life by preventing him from going into battle during the war, it exacted a heavy toll during his lifetime as manifest by Post-Polio Syndrome, a gradually progressive loss of function in the nerves damaged by the original polio infection. Still, through strong determination aided by technology he remained mobile until almost the end. Native Arkansan, proud Veteran, devoted husband, loving father, determined survivor, rest in peace.

Billy is survived by daughter Mary Jane Anderson and husband Jim of Plano, Texas; daughter Betty Ann Smith and husband Jerry along with granddaughter Laura-Marie of Jonesboro, Arkansas; sister Jean Mitchell

Jernigan of Little Rock, niece Jean McGehee of LR, grand niece Jillian McGehee of Little Rock and grand nephew Mitch McGehee of San Francisco, California; niece Lue Taff and her husband Harold of Coppell, TX; niece Bheti Bruton Smith of Little Rock with sons Patton and Chase; step-grandson Chris Anderson and wife Anna of Double Oak, TX and their sons Matthew and Nathan; step-granddaughter Jenny McGuire and husband Larry of San Diego, CA and their twins Patrick and Alison; and step-granddaughter Tracey Meinecke and husband Chris of Solihull, West Midlands, U.K. and son Brooks. Funeral service will take place Friday January 25 at 2:00 PM in the Morrilton First United Methodist Church followed by graveside services at Elmwood Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests donations to one of the following:
First United Methodist Church of Morrilton, 201 South Chestnut, Morrilton, AR 72110, Conway County Farm Bureau Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 648, Morrilton, AR 72110, or <http://support.woundedwarriorproject.org>
Arrangements are by Harris Funeral Home of Morrilton.

Tribute Wall



“ *William "Billy" Moore Mitchell, Jr.*

January 30, 2023 at 02:08 AM



“ *Betty Ann - you are in our thoughts and prayers. I am so sorry for your loss.*

Lee Ann Graddy - June 29, 2018 at 09:16 PM



“ *Mary Jane and Betty Ann and families, I'm truly sorry for the loss of Mitch. He was a great person and one of a kind. I remember being a kid and him driving his motorcycle's up to my parents house many times. That was so cool. He was a great friend not only to me but my whole family. My sister Rachel tell's a story that she was driving Mitch somewhere when she was 16 and he told her that she sure needed to use her blinkers, most young people dont use thier blinkers these days...! I miss having lunches with him at Bonanza! We did that for many years and even after I came to Russellville he would drive up and we had lunch up here. God bless all of you and he will be missed greatly!!*

Jeff Maus - June 29, 2018 at 09:16 PM



“ *I am very sorry to hear that Billy and Marie have both passed away. I was with the Arkansas Farm Bureau for 40 years and had the pleasure of knowing and working with Billy for many of those years. He was an outstanding board member and a good friend. We will miss him.*

kelly Hargis - June 29, 2018 at 09:16 PM

MC

“ 1 Corinthians 1:3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Father of mercies and God of ALL comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction...

Your daddy awoke on Monday when I told him how sorry I was about your mother's sweet passing and that I was glad he was with her and able to go to her funeral. He spoke up for her and three times said in effect, "yes, yes, yes"

Then he said, "bye, bye".

I did not want to go but he wanted to go.

As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:8 We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with The LORD.

I feel for you losing both your parents in 2 weeks and am praying that The GOD of COMFORT will tenderly comfort you.

Melinda Owens Carnahan

Melinda Owens Carnahan - June 29, 2018 at 09:16 PM

NM

“ *I am so sorry for your loss. You are in my thoughts and prayers. Mr. & Mrs. Mitchell had a dinner for Ed & I when we got married at their cabin on Petit Jean. I will never forget their kindness. All of us share your grief. Nancy Causey Massey (Mrs. Edmund)*

Nancy Causey Massey - June 29, 2018 at 09:16 PM

DS

“ Betty Ann & Mary Jane,

As you know your Mom and Dad have been friends with Bill and me for many years. First when I was your piano teacher and later when we started traveling with them.

They were so much fun especially when your Dad would be planning where we would be eating dinner when we had just finished lunch.

After Bill died they were so kind to ask me to go to Branson with them at Treasure Lake. Marie and would go shopping and Billy would go to an Airplane Show.

They were great friends and will be missed by many.

I will never forget the last time I went with Billy to see Marie at the Nursing Home. We took Marie to the Sonic and they were holding hands and your Dad said, "If I could I would take you home with me." Now they are together.

God bless and keep you.

Dorothy Stobaugh - June 29, 2018 at 09:16 PM

LM

“ Dear Mary Jane, Jim & Family,

Even though it's been a couple months since the loss of your Dad, I know you still think of him and miss him each and everyday. While in a better place, it seems we're never really ready to let them go.

We hope to hear from you one of these days soon. Maybe this is the spring you'll visit Grand Lake O' The Cherokees, Grove and Monkey Island. We have lots of room and you have an open invitation. We'll get with Ed and cook up a surprise dinner for Barbara too.

Take care, again our sincere condolences, and much love,

Marilyn & Larry

Larry N Marilyn Mlnarik - June 29, 2018 at 09:16 PM

ER

“ *I always treasured my relationship with Billy. As a young Farm Bureau employee he was always helpful to me in his position as both a county and state board member. His love and numerous contributions to agriculture will be missed.*

Embry Raley - January 25, 2013 at 12:00 AM