



Billy Lawrence

December 24, 1927 - April 15, 2011

Odessa – Bill Lawrence, 83, passed away at the Odessa Hospice House on Friday, April 15, 2011. Bill was born on December 24, 1927, in Arlington to Edd R. Lawrence and Ruby Mae Wilcox Lawrence and he was reared in the Gladewater/Tyler area graduating from Tyler High in 1946. He served two stints in the U. S. Navy. He later earned a bachelor's degree from Baylor University and a master's degree from East Texas State Teachers College. He was a teacher and painter for over 40 years. He retired from Odessa College having previously taught in Tyler and Odessa schools. Bill never met a stranger and was a great encourager to many! He was recently described as a "Gentleman and a Gentle Man." Bill served his God first and then his wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They were his pride and joy! Bill served as a longtime deacon in the First Baptist Church of Odessa and distributed many Bibles over the years as a Gideon. He was one of the founders' of "LKL Ranch" and Summer Day Camp in Tyler. He married Estal Lee Lawrence on December 4, 1948, and enjoyed nearly 63 years of marriage. They had two sons and a daughter. His son, Bruce Wayne, preceded him in death in 1955 as well as his brother, Bobby James Lawrence. Survivors include: his wife of Odessa; son, Terry Paul Lawrence of Lewisville; daughter, Jana Smith of Odessa; sisters, LaWanna Bean of Garland and Ann Jones of Goldonna, LA; 7 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren and numerous other relatives. Graveside services will be held in the chapel at Stewart Family Funeral Home in Tyler on Monday, April 18, 2011, at 11 a.m. with visitation

beginning at 9 a.m.

Tribute Wall

LB

“ *Bill, you lived a long happy life surrounded by good friends and loving family. You will be missed but we will always remember you in our hearts.*

Lawanna Bean - April 15, 2011 at 12:00 AM

PW

“ *I will always remember this family as very kind and loving. In some of the darkest times of my life, the Lawrence family took care of me. I will never forget. Bill was a father to me when I did not have one. No matter what the circumstance, he loved unconditionally. He was a very gracious person. I don't think I ever remember him when he wasn't smiling or had something positive to say. I know that he will be missed greatly by the family. My love and prayers are with you all.*

Patti Jo Seay Williams - April 15, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SS

“ *Bawpa...you were an amazing man!! You will be missed by so many!! I will cherish the many memories I have of you & with you. You took time to teach me so much. Your love for your family was always so strong. You have a place in my life that can never be taken by any other. Your spirit & love will continue to live on through the legacy you have left. You will never be forgotten!! I love you so much & miss you tremendously!!! Thank you for being such a huge part of my life & who I am!!!*

Shauna Scott - April 15, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CG

“ Rest in peace, Bill ~ remembering all the cups of coffee you and Larry drank at Catfish & CO. Love & prayers to your loved ones, God Bless.

Larry & Cheryl Gist

cheryll gist - April 15, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JV

“ Best Bawpa in the World,
There are few words that can measure your meaning and impact within my life growing up. You taught me so much - you taught me how to play tennis (I wasn't great), you taught me how to paint (again, wasn't great), you taught me how to ride a bike (I think I can still do that one)! When teaching me how to ride on the street ironically right below the Room with the View where you passed away in the Hospice House I begged you not to let me go and I heard your footsteps along side of me. You encouraged me to pedal faster and I did - coupled with your heavy stepping. You were right with me and I was riding! You let me go and my independence didn't last long and I fell and scraped my knee. Through the tears I said, "I told you not to let me go!" You reached out your giant hand and helped me to my feet and said, "If I never let you go, then you just won't do it!" Bawpa, now it's my turn to let you go and it's the hardest thing I've ever had to do in my 33 years of life, but God needs His faithful Servant back. We need you to know that we love you and know that above all you taught me how to be a teacher and each day I try to be like you and let His light shine through just as you did as a teacher. You have done so much for so many and now it's your turn to collect your crown of life. I hope to hear your footsteps next to me again someday as you followed close by side here on earth. I love you!

Jennifer Smith Villines - April 15, 2011 at 12:00 AM