



William C. Franko

March 30, 1931 - March 3, 2018

William (Bill) Franko, a longtime resident of Dearborn MI, passed away peacefully on Saturday, March 3, 2018, in his home in Heritage Palms Golf and Country Club in Fort Myers, Florida.

He was born on March 30, 1931, in Washington PA, to Albert Franko and Anna Petros.

Bill married the love of his life, Geraldine (Geri - but always "Tiger" to him) Wesley, of Detroit MI, on October 23, 1954. Ever the gentleman, Geri had been dating his friend, and Bill asked for his blessing first. That date would begin their life together for 63-plus treasured years. When asked if he would ever change anything, he always replied "I would have married her sooner."

Bill and Geri were blessed with three wonderful daughters: Debbie (Danny Kaloupek) Franko of Newton MA, Cindy Franko and Shari (Jeff Lucyk) Franko.

Bill spent his career at Ford Motor Company and went on "permanent vacation" in 1992 after 42 years.

After retirement, Bill and Geri split their time between Michigan and Florida, living the good life and making many friends. In his Florida neighborhood, Bill became known as 'the guy who could fix anything.'

Bill was an avid golfer. When he wasn't with family, fixing things, or at Ford, you would likely find him on the golf course. Bill had a terrific sense of humor. At one time, he sought a career as a comedian. He instead found lifelong reward in bringing laughter to everyone around him, including participants of the Komen Detroit Race for the Cure, where he volunteered for 22 years. His smile was infectious and lit up every room he entered.

In addition to Geri and his children Debbie and Shari, Bill's love continues in life through his grandchildren, Jennifer (Dan) Pajot, Ben Franko Kaloupek, Emma Franko Kaloupek, great grandson Tiernan William Pajot, his sister Betty, of Charlotte NC, his brother Jerry of Buffalo NY, and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, his daughter Cindy, his brothers Edward and Albert and sister Joyce.

When faced with his final challenge, Bill never complained or felt sorry for himself. When the nurse affixed his DNR bracelet, he said "thank you" with boyish charm. He expressed gratitude every day and in every situation. He prayed every night - his faith in God sustained him.

He stayed positive and hopeful always. In his last few weeks on earth, his love Geri, never left his side. He and his family were grateful for every extra day and together thanked God for a lifetime of blessings. His final days were at home, surrounded by loved ones.

Visitation will be at Vermuelen-Sajewski Funeral Home, 980 N. Newburgh Rd. in Westland, Michigan on Thursday, March 15, 2:00-9:00 pm and on Friday, March 16, 12:00-9:00 pm. Rosary on Friday at 4:00 PM. In state at 9:30 AM until the 10:00 AM funeral mass at St. Kenneth Catholic Church, 14951 N. Haggerty Rd, Plymouth, MI 48170.

Memorial tributes may be made to the family and will be distributed to Hope Hospice and to Komen Detroit Race for the Cure.

But if you want to truly memorialize Bill, take a friend or family member out to lunch or go play some golf. Eat a tootsie roll or two. Laugh out loud, smile a lot, make someone's day. Tell a joke and stories that are mostly true. Then pick up the tab. Bill would.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 15. 2:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Westland
980 North Newburgh Road
Westland, MI 48185
(734) 326-1300
westland@vermeulenfh.com

Visitation

MAR 16. 12:00 PM - 9:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Westland
980 North Newburgh Road
Westland, MI 48185
(734) 326-1300
westland@vermeulenfh.com

In state

MAR 17. 9:30 AM - 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Kenneth Catholic Church
14951 North Haggerty Road
Plymouth, MI 48170
vermeulenfh@comcast.net

Funeral Mass

MAR 17. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

St. Kenneth Catholic Church
14951 North Haggerty Road
Plymouth, MI 48170
vermeulenh@comcast.net

Tribute Wall



“ *William C. Franko*

December 07, 2023 at 05:11 AM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Geri Franko - December 14, 2018 at 08:04 PM



“ *1 file added to the album New Album Name*



Geri Franko - December 14, 2018 at 08:01 PM

BB

“ We will always remember Bill for the two different socks on the golf course (one w/ red stripes, one w/ black stripes) his clowning around, jokes and ever present smile. He was always humble & caring - qualities many of us strive for. He told me many times how proud he was of his family. He felt blessed and wanted us to know. Bill knew how to have a good time and made sure the rest of us were having one too. You two made a great team. We are blessed to share your friendship and we will miss Bill too.

Always in our heart -

Love,

Debbie & Bob Baker

Heritage Palms

Bob Baker - March 31, 2018 at 06:47 PM

ND

“ Bill was the most cheerful man I knew in building 4. Whenever I saw him, he brought a smile to my face...and to many others. I loved that he called you 'Tiger' with such affection. What a wonderful team you were. Bill will be missed by many. Please accept my most sincere sympathy to you and your family. He was always so proud of them.

Much love,

Nancy Donahue

Heritage Palms

Nancy Donahue - March 31, 2018 at 06:41 PM

HT

“ It was our absolute pleasure to have been able to care for Bill over the years. Getting to know him and his family was a beautiful thing. His joy of life, positive attitude and dedication to happiness was infectious. We looked forward to his coordination outfits with his wife and witnessing the love he shared with his family. He was our tootsie roll guy :) He made a place in all our hearts.

With love, The Henry Ford Fairlane Oncology Team

Henry Ford Fairlane Onc Team - March 25, 2018 at 02:23 PM

SF

“ 1 file added to the album Military Honors_3/17/2018



Shari Franko - March 23, 2018 at 07:33 PM

JL

“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Jeff Lucyk - March 19, 2018 at 10:29 AM

GG

“ I worked with Bill in the template shop at Ford Motor Co. He always had a smile on his face. . He always called me GG. Always fun to be in his company.
It is a pleasure to have known Bill.

Gerry Garavaglia

Gerry Garavaglia - March 15, 2018 at 11:02 AM

TF

“ Tim and Bonnie Malpassi and Family purchased the Garden of Serenity Bouquet for the family of William C. Franko.



Tim and Bonnie Malpassi and Family - March 14, 2018 at 11:15 PM

MS

“ Mary Anne Schultz lit a candle in memory of William C. Franko



Mary Anne Schultz - March 13, 2018 at 07:20 PM

II

“ *Worked, Golfed, Danced with Bill and his lovely wife, and even had the privilege of spending the night in his beautiful Florida home. Always with a smile and a joke and a helping hand if necessary. A good man, a kind man, my father would have described him as, one of nature's gentlemen, and so do I. He will be missed.*

Ian Inglis & Dorothy Lesperance

IAN R INGLIS - March 12, 2018 at 03:00 PM

PW

“ *Always enjoyed being in the company of Bill. The only person that ever called me Pauly, almost from the first day I met him. I will fondly remember that. Rest In Peace Bill. Paul Weller.*

Paul Weller - March 11, 2018 at 12:18 PM

PW

“ *Paul and Rachel Weller purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of William C. Franko.*



Paul and Rachel Weller - March 11, 2018 at 12:04 PM

GF

“ *1 file added to the album New Album Name*



Geri Franko - March 10, 2018 at 11:08 PM

JE

“ You always knew you were in his good graces when he called you by the nickname he came up with, just for you.

Jeff'r

jeff - March 10, 2018 at 08:51 AM

LK

“ Just loved your Dad. So sweet and kind and funny!

Laura Kosowski - March 10, 2018 at 02:17 AM

KM

“ He was, and still is, a gift to all whose lives he touched by way of his sunny disposition and his charity and determination. I may not always follow his example, (the gift) but I do try and I remember.

Kathy Manley - March 10, 2018 at 02:17 AM

JK

“ Your dad will always be remembered as such a handsome, kind, and always wearing a beautiful smile.

Julie Kerr - March 10, 2018 at 02:15 AM

CG

“ I have memories of that infectious smile and his kind words when he and your mom would stop by the salon when I was there.

---Carolyn and Bob Gates

Carolyn Gates - March 10, 2018 at 02:15 AM

PO

“ I have so many fond memories of your dad. The pool in your backyard and all the fun we had. I know it is sad to say goodbye, but he had a good life and was active till the end. That is a gift we all hope for. I hope your memories and all our love for you and your family carry you through this difficult time.

peggy ott - March 10, 2018 at 02:14 AM

JF

“ He was a super guy and one of the few cousins we kept in touch with. Maybe it was because he and Bob were so alike. Some people even thought they resembled each other. Your parents came to see us when they were in Canonsburg. He always made us laugh. He will be greatly missed by both family and friends.

---Bob and Janice Fetcko



Jan and Bob Fetcko - March 10, 2018 at 02:12 AM

VC

“ He was an extraordinary man. Kind. Happy. Quick witted. A GOOD man! I am happy to have known him. He made my life richer by his friendship! What a lucky soul to be with those he loved to say goodbye and peacefully sleep.

Vicki Chun - March 10, 2018 at 02:07 AM

TT

“ Thank God I got to speak with him a few weeks ago! He was a great man and loved his family. God bless all of you and may he rest in peace.

Tony Tombrillo - March 10, 2018 at 02:06 AM

NZ

“ Bill was a truly wonderful person, an absolute gem and a sincere gentleman. We both will miss him greatly.
---Nancy and Herc



Nancy Zak - March 10, 2018 at 02:03 AM

KM

“ Your parents are some of the most beautiful people I know. What a love affair!
-Karen Middleton HFMC

Karen Middleton - March 10, 2018 at 01:59 AM

KP

“ We feel blessed to have been able to witness his love for life, sense of humor, and humbleness (some through your witnessing). Having lost both parents I can say it will not be easy, but your heart will have all the memories you made with him and know that you helped share in the life he enjoyed so much. Now he is looking down with that real smile on his face watching over all of you and in no discomfort.

---Kathy and Ange (Heritage Palms)



Kathy Pedulla - March 10, 2018 at 01:56 AM

GA

“ Your Dad was a wonderful man, kind and considerate , polite and with real old fashioned good manners . His devotion to your Mom and his love and pride in all of you was so much the measure of him as a man. I will miss him so much.

Glan & Beth Ashwood - March 10, 2018 at 01:51 AM

BD

“ Our hearts and prayers go out to you All! What a beautiful person Uncle Bill was - all the kindness and love that he spread is still with us; and like waves shared with so many more.

---Beth (DeBeliso), Joel, Josh & Cole VandeBerg

Beth DeBeliso - March 10, 2018 at 01:50 AM

BB

“ *Bill was a great guy and wonderful neighbor. He was always smiling and had a joke for us whenever we saw him. We will always remember his red sock on one foot and black on the other and the crazy golf ball he would switch to for putting when we played golf together.*

---Bob and Debbie B (Heritage Palms neighbors)

Bob Baker - March 10, 2018 at 01:49 AM

TP

“ *I loved your Dad, and we always had a good thing between us. You were such wonderful daughters, and he loved you so much. We can all take comfort in the memories.*

Ted Powers - March 10, 2018 at 01:45 AM

DP

“ *We always loved your Mom and Dad. Ed said Bill was the first person to give him a job at 50 cents an hour. I always remember seeing your mom and dad at the Pardee street block parties and different places and just watching them you could just see the love they had for each other -- I swear it just radiated. He always made us laugh and he was such a kind person.*

---Dee and Ed Ponagai

Dee Ponagai - March 10, 2018 at 01:45 AM

JW

“ *Your dad was one of the most special people I have ever known. He blessed you, but he was also blessed to have the love of his life and wonderful, loving daughters.*

Judy White - March 10, 2018 at 01:42 AM

RZ

“ It has been very clear through the years of the strong and loving bond that you have had with your father. You are both your father’s daughters because you are among the most kind, generous and cheery & happy people I know.

Rose Zimering - March 10, 2018 at 01:41 AM

JS

“ What a lovely, giving man your Dad was. I feel blessed to have met him and felt his kindness.
---Jo Shapiro and Peter Goldbach

Jo Shapiro - March 10, 2018 at 01:40 AM

CF

“ He was a wonderful man who always had a smile and a nice word for everyone but more important was the love he evidenced for your mom and you. He was a man who never pulled a punch when it came to loving the people in his life. That’s an ideal we can all strive to attain.
--Chris and Bob Fonticharo (Race for the Cure)

Chris Fontichiaro - March 10, 2018 at 01:39 AM

KB

“ He was such a character always making things bright and funny. You have to love his authentic spirit. We will all miss him dearly.
---Kay Buhr (Debbie’s friend since kindergarten)

Kay Griffith Buhr - March 10, 2018 at 01:38 AM

JK

“ I will miss him so much. He would always bring us tootsie rolls in the office. He would seek us each out individually and make sure he hand delivered them to us.

---Joney Kelly (Heritage Palms)

Joney Kelly - March 10, 2018 at 01:37 AM

DM

“ My heart goes out to mom, you, and all your family, with the passing of your VERY LOVING and FUN DAD!! EVERYONE whose life your dad touched will deeply miss him, yet remember him very warmly, and with a big smile. He was a ONE-OF-A-KIND EXCEPTIONALLY SPECIAL MAN!! We feel the same way about mom!! God bless them, they have so much love for each other, and they still had that special glow you have when you're in love!!

---Dee, Jim, Caroline (Italian American Club friends from Fort Myers)

Dolores Morlas - March 10, 2018 at 01:36 AM

AM

“ Whenever I saw him and asked how he was doing, I always chuckled because he would reply, “Still Kicking” and then he would kick his leg. He was always kind and sincerely cared when asking how I was doing. His kindness lives on through you with your kindness! He obviously taught his children well and now you and your family will carry on his legacy in my eyes of “kindness, caring and compassion for others.”

Andrea McCarraher - March 10, 2018 at 01:35 AM

JS

“ *What a passing of a wonderful, kind, humorous father, husband, and friend to so many. He touched all our lives. I bet he was the longest living patient with mantle cell lymphoma. His power of positive thinking and goodness is an inspiration for all of us to behold. I wanted to cry yesterday when I heard this news, but I turned my grief into joy and smiled instead, remembering the life of Bill Franko. He would want no tears. I said my prayers to him - no doubt he is in heaven with all those he loved.*

Jan Schane - March 10, 2018 at 01:34 AM

SP

“ *He was one of a kind! I feel sad for all of us, but very happy for Bill and the wonderful life he experienced!*

Sharon Palise - March 10, 2018 at 01:32 AM

JB

“ *I've enjoyed the years of knowing Bill, being such a wonderful man. It'll take awhile to accept since he was always such a positive person and always willing to help out with advice or no matter what the cause. I'll miss the many conversations with him, because of his knowledge of just about everything. He was easy to talk with. Bill was also a great friend of my Mom and Dad. They always spoke highly of him through the years...and he helped my mother out many times. MaryAnne will miss him as well.*



Joe Blazo - March 10, 2018 at 01:26 AM

LL

“ *I truly loved your dad. He was warmth, love and goodness personified. Just thinking of him makes me smile.*

Lila Lazarus - March 10, 2018 at 01:09 AM

TR

“ *Bill was more than a friend to me. He was a father figure to me. I strive to be like him. Loving, caring, sharing. Even through the rough times, he never complained. Always smiling and encouraging others to be the best that they could be. He was a bright light to all. When we would play a golf course with lots of Water Bill was "aquaman." His ball retriever would start as a Harry potter wand and stretch out for a mile. He would clean out a pond in seconds and never slow down a round of golf. He would offer up every ball he found to us. Some weeks he would bring each guy a bag with their favorites. The best part was the fun and laughter. Great memories golfing with your dad, my brother Pete, Bill Ferrise and me.*

Tom Rizzo - March 10, 2018 at 01:06 AM

BF

“ Words could never express how much I loved and cared about Bill. He and I were great close friends for almost 40 years.

When your parents lived around the corner from my in-laws in Dearborn Heights, they took my children in their home as if they were their grandchildren. My children loved them so much, because your dad always gave them tootsie rolls and they swam in their pool for many summers. They continued to love them many years moving forward until they moved to North Carolina.

I was very fortunate to spend many, many days and nights with your dad either playing golf in the same league for 20 years or bowling on the same team with him for 20 years. I loved being around him, his energy, his positive attitude and loving spirit. I loved hanging out either at the club house after golf or the lounge in the bowling alley for hours. He was a huge pain in the butt to play golf with because all he did was hawk lost golf balls (he had a million of them, and would give them away to all of us he played with) He was so funny and our personalities meshed so well together. We got each other, we had the same strong loving family values, we cared about people and we were always willing to reach out a hand to anyone in need.

I left Michigan 13 years ago and we always kept in contact with each other over the phone. It was like we were still seeing each other all the time. The last time I spoke to him was about 4 months ago. I could tell that he was starting to slow down and not as up beat as he always was.

I will be 63 in June and he was like a second dad to me. His wisdom, seeing him as a father and his life experiences help guide and mold me into the man and dad I have become for my 3 children.

I will miss my dear friend immensely, I pray that God keep his hand over your family and heal your hearts. I pray the God has a special

place and assignment for your dad. I also pray that when I pass and meet him again, he has a tee time made and some more great stories to share with me.

They broke the mold when Bill Franko was born, there will never be another like him.

*I love him dearly,
-Bill Ferrise*

Bill Ferrise - March 10, 2018 at 01:00 AM

FS

“*Bill was one of my favorite people to golf with EVER. He had a great sense of humor which kept everyone in the foursome relaxed and patient. He never got angry, or if he did he didn't show it. Building 4 in Heritage Palms will never be the same for me as I will miss seeing his smiling face as I come down the stairs, asking Bill how he was doing and he would say, "Hi Frankie, I am still kicking" while simultaneously kicking each leg a couple of times. One of the greatest blessings we had by coming to Florida was having Bill Franko as a neighbor and friend. May he rest in peace!*
-Frank Stout

Frank & Penny Stout - March 10, 2018 at 12:56 AM

“ My friend Bill :-

I first met Bill when my wife Beth and I rented Shari's condo at Heritage Palms Country Club Fort Myers Florida .

We had travelled from England to holiday at Heritage Palms for the the month of November 2007.

Shari had arranged for Bill and Geri to meet us at the condo and show us around . We met them outside the condo entrance and Bill immediately helped with our cases and showed us the things we needed to know about the condo. I had brought my golf clubs with me hoping to play the two courses that Heritage Palms provided and Bill asked me if I would like to join him and two others for a game a couple of days later. At the same time Geri asked Beth to join her and go for coffee whilst the guys were playing golf. This was the start of a great friendship between us all.

A four ball game was arranged with Bill, Don Hoke, Jack Wall and myself.

What followed were many more wonderful times spent in their company with lots of laughter from the jokes and dry humour shared between them during the game.

We have returned each year not just to enjoy our holidays at Heritage but to meet again with Bill and Geri for many more games of golf , meeting for lunch at the clubhouse, going to the cinema and dinner out at the local restaurants.

There are so many more stories to tell of our times together , far to many to include here but suffice to say I will treasure the memories of them all.

Over the years I had the privilege of spending a lot of time with Bill as we often played golf just us two together not just playing the game but also putting the world to rights on our way round the course. He was always happy always positive and as he so often said , we are so blessed.

Bill was a loving husband to Geri, father to Debbie, Cindy and Shari grandfather to Ben, Emma and Jennifer and recently a great grandfather to Jennifer and Danny's son Tiernan William. Also with Sons in Law Danny and Jeff, he was so proud of them all .

His spirit will live on through his family and the the many friends he made throughout the years.

Bill was kind and generous , caring and thoughtful to others . His devotion to Geri and his family was wonderful to see and an inspiration to us all.

Bill was a true gentleman whose passing leaves the world a lesser place and he will be greatly missed by all who new him.

So thank you Bill for your laughter, your smile ,your sense of humour and your generosity .

Thank you for being you and thank you for being my friend. Glan.



Glan Ashwood - March 10, 2018 at 12:51 AM