



William Joseph Vollano

October 20, 1930 - January 30, 2026

Vollano, William Joseph, January 30, 2026 age 95 of Saline, MI. Beloved husband of the late Gina.

Loving father of Beth (Thomas) Hosey, William J. Vollano Jr., and Ann (Natalia Litkewycz) Vollano.

Proud grandfather of Christopher Hosey, Stephen (Tiffany) Hosey, Kathryn (Will) Tidwell, Heather (Ron) Vollano-DeVee, and Christina (Mark) Bejin and great grandfather of Lucas Hosey, Laya Hosey, Jaxon Tidwell, Charlotte Tidwell, Isabella Bejin, Ariana Bejin and Reece Vollano-DeVee.

William J. “Bill” Vollano was born on October 20, 1930, in New Haven, Connecticut, to Mary and Joseph Vollano. He grew up in New Haven with a natural curiosity and a quiet strength that showed itself early in life. Bill was always willing to work, and as a young man he tried his hand at many jobs—most of them summer work—ranging from locker room supervisor and boiler maker assistant to bingo caller, ditch digger, and wire maker. His dreams were just as varied as his work, moving from hopes of owning a ranch in Texas, to learning his father’s jewelry trade, to engineering, and eventually to a deeper calling: a life dedicated to helping others.

Bill found that calling during his senior year at the University of Connecticut, when he chose social work as his profession. A defining experience during that time made him deeply aware of how easily people can be treated unfairly—and how those moments can shape a life. Through reflection and

conversations with others, Bill developed a deep compassion for the struggles many people face. These insights strengthened his sense of empathy, fairness, and responsibility, and confirmed his desire to devote his life to service.

He graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1952 and from the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work in 1954. Bill began his professional journey as a probation officer at the Family Court in Wilmington, Delaware, before joining the U.S. Army. He served as a Psychiatric Social Work Officer at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, where his steady calm and kindness were a comfort to many.

As a direct commissioned officer, Bill completed a four-week orientation that included weapons demonstrations, live-fire exercises, and crawling through an infiltration course while a .30-caliber machine gun fired live ammunition just three feet overhead. Trainees were warned that if they encountered a snake, they should not stand: “Let it bite you. We can cure a snake bite. A .30-caliber bullet is harder to cure.” Surrounded by doctors, nurses, and biochemists, Bill served as the only Second Lieutenant—an example of his quiet courage and commitment. He was later promoted to First Lieutenant.

After his military service, Bill returned to Connecticut and spent eight years as a psychiatric social worker at Griffin Hospital in Derby, where he helped establish the hospital’s first psychiatric clinic. In 1967, he founded the Homemaker Services Bureau in New Haven and became its first CEO. During this time, he was selected to serve on the inaugural board of directors of the nation’s first hospice. He also served on the boards of the Heart and Cancer Societies and was elected Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus in Madison, Connecticut. In 1964, he was elected Chairman of the Southern Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers—recognition of the deep respect he earned from his peers.

While leading the Homemaker Services Bureau, Bill also spent three years teaching sociology part-time in the prison system. When he was once called into the warden’s office, he expected to be questioned about his background.

Instead, he was told simply, “We do not bargain for hostages.” That moment stayed with him—an example of the seriousness and integrity of the work he had chosen.

Bill later moved with his wife Gina and their three children to Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he became CEO of Washtenaw Child and Family Service. The agency was small at the time, offering family counseling and a modest homemaker program. Under Bill’s steady leadership, it grew into a thriving community resource, adding skilled nursing, a food bank, transportation services, adult day care, and drug treatment programs including methadone services. His work helped build a stronger, more caring community.

Bill also served for several years on the Michigan Volunteer Agency Group, reviewing unemployment claims from nonprofit agencies. During his 20-year tenure at Child and Family Service, the agency’s budget grew nearly tenfold to nearly \$6 million. It became a fully integrated health and social service organization, and upon his retirement the Board of Directors honored him by naming the agency’s new building on Packard Road The William J. Vollano Center.

In retirement, Bill continued his life of service as the local coordinator for the Veterans History Project. While interviewing Vietnam veteran Charles Kettles of Ypsilanti, Bill was deeply moved by the story he heard. With Charlie’s permission, Bill began the long and challenging process of seeking an upgrade of his military honors to the Medal of Honor. With support from Congresswoman Dingell’s office, the effort succeeded. Four and a half years later, Charles Kettles received the Medal of Honor from President Barack Obama. Bill often joked that his earlier “claim to fame” had been having dinner with Eleanor Roosevelt while a student at UConn—but that moment was surpassed when President Obama mentioned Bill by name four times during the Medal of Honor ceremony.

Through the Veterans History Project, Bill interviewed many veterans, including Lt. Col. Jefferson, one of the first Tuskegee fighter pilots. He later

entrusted the project to the Archives Department at Eastern Michigan University, ensuring these stories would be preserved for future generations. Bill's life was defined by compassion, quiet leadership, and a deep belief in fairness, dignity, and service. He devoted himself to helping others in ways both large and small, and his steady kindness touched countless lives. He leaves behind a lasting legacy of care, strength, and hope that will continue to inspire all who knew him.

Visitation will be held Monday February 9th, 4 – 8 PM. A funeral service will be held following the visitation at 7 PM at Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, 46401 Ann Arbor Road West (between Sheldon and Beck) Plymouth. Military Federal Honors to follow the service.

The family requests casual attire at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Junes Children's Research Hospital 501 St Jude Pl, Memphis TN 38105-9959.

To share a memory, please use the share a memory tab on this webpage.

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 9. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenh.com

Funeral Service

FEB 9. 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home Plymouth
46401 Ann Arbor Road West
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 459-2250
plymouth@vermeulenh.com

Military Federal Honors to follow.

Tribute Wall

AR

“ *Bill was a terrific friend in our lives. Our sympathy to all his family. Al and Jan Rudisill*

Al and Jan Rudisill - February 09 at 04:05 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of William Joseph Vollano.*



February 08 at 05:59 PM

WR

“ *With sympathy, Maura Rains planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William Joseph Vollano.*

With sympathy, Maura Rains - February 07 at 05:25 PM

WR

“ *With sympathy, Maura Rains purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of William Joseph Vollano.*



With sympathy, Maura Rains - February 07 at 05:25 PM

PB

“ Patricia B. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William Joseph Vollano.

Patricia B. - February 03 at 02:13 PM

PB

“ I can't begin to express how wonderful Bill was! The ways in which he enriched my life are seared into my memories and my heart swells at thoughts of him and Gina. They were both amazing individuals filled with love for so many. He was an extraordinary example for those of us who worked with him and called him friend. My sympathies and love to Beth, Bill Jr. and Ann. Thank you so much for sharing your Dad and Mom with me.

Pat Bergeron - February 03 at 02:11 PM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of William Joseph Vollano.



February 02 at 04:21 PM

TF

“ The Whitmore family purchased the Beautiful Heart Bouquet for the family of William Joseph Vollano.



The Whitmore family - February 01 at 08:47 PM

VC

“ Victor and Catherine planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William Joseph Vollano.

Victor and Catherine - February 01 at 06:41 PM

VC

“ Victor and Catherine purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of William Joseph Vollano.



Victor and Catherine - February 01 at 06:41 PM

TF

“ The Litkewycz Family purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of William Joseph Vollano.



The Litkewycz Family - February 01 at 01:35 PM

TF

“ The Litkewycz Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William Joseph Vollano.

The Litkewycz Family - February 01 at 01:35 PM

AV

“ William Vollano, age 95, passed away after a courageous battle with a rare form of liver cancer, surrounded by his loving family. A proud military veteran and devoted social worker, William lived a life rooted in service, integrity, and quiet strength.

William was a man of deep character—kind, strong-willed, genuine, and loving. With his calm and gentle nature, he had a way of making people feel safe, heard, and truly valued. He cherished his independence and resilience, living on his own and even driving until just a few months ago, a reflection of his determination and steadfast spirit.

Above all else, William’s greatest pride and joy was his family. His children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren meant everything to him, and he spoke of them with constant love and admiration. His legacy lives on through them—in the values he modeled, the lessons he taught by example, and the unconditional love he gave so freely.

At the heart of William’s life was his love story with Gina. Married just three weeks short of 70 years, theirs was a marriage defined by devotion, tenderness, and deep respect. Even after all those years, they still held hands, kissed, laughed together, and cared for one another with a sweetness that never faded. Their love was steady and enduring, the kind that grows stronger with time. When Gina passed in 2024, William felt her absence profoundly, yet his love for her remained constant. He honored her memory in quiet, beautiful ways—bringing her fresh flowers every week and carrying her with him in every moment, until they could be together again.

William never sought the spotlight and was beyond kind. One of the simple joys of his life was “paying it forward.” He would quietly and anonymously pay for a stranger’s meal, donuts, or coffee, never revealing it was him. In these small, selfless acts, William found profound joy, believing deeply in kindness without recognition.

Those who knew William will remember him as a gentle, steady presence—a man whose goodness was felt more than spoken, and whose love was given freely and without condition. His life leaves behind a legacy of compassion, humility, and quiet generosity that will continue to live on in the hearts of those who loved him.

A viewing will be held on Monday, February 9, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home, located at 46401 Ann Arbor Road West, Plymouth, MI 48170. A short prayer and eulogy will take place at 7:00 p.m., followed by military honors. The family kindly requests casual attire, in keeping with William's humble and down-to-earth spirit.

ANN VOLLANO - February 01 at 10:21 AM

JP

Your parents were really special people. I will hold them in my heart tonight and in my prayers. I'm sorry I wasn't able to join you.

Jill Pritts - February 09 at 06:51 PM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of William Joseph Vollano.*



February 01 at 10:00 AM