



Billy Rex Roussel

October 16, 1928 - February 19, 2025

Billy Rex Roussel

Bill Roussel of Searcy, Ark. passed away in his home at the age of 96. Born in Newark, Ark. on October 16, 1928, Bill lived a full life until he took his last breath on February 19, 2025.

Bill was born a second-generation American to parents Norman Edgar Roussel and Beulah Mae House Trotter Roussel, the youngest of many siblings. The son of a sharecropper, he spent his childhood helping his family on the farm. Though he only received an 8th grade education, he excelled far past his means. At age 16, with no means to provide for themselves, Bill and his brother Edward Max joined the United States military out of both love for their country and a need for provisions.

Bill Roussel achieved the rank of Sergeant First Class in the U.S. Army as part of the 54th Engineers. He served with the 50th Engineer Aviation Battalion as part of the occupation forces in the European theater of World War II, stationed in Germany. In 1949, he reenlisted and was assigned to the 54th Engineers, immediately assigned to Camp Fowler in Sendai, Japan. A month after the start of the war, Bill was on the ground in Korea and served there for 32 months before returning home. His time serving his country remained one of the greatest honors of his life.

He lived many lives – working in auto factory in Detroit, driving buses in St. Louis and for the majority of his career, leading one of the largest insurance agencies in Arkansas at the time and one of the oldest third-party administrators. Bill was a lifetime member of the Million Dollar Round Table and over 20 years built a \$500,000,000 volume life agency with Union Life Insurance Company. He was never one to slow down, which is why even in retirement, he continued to work in property development in western Searcy with his wife, Amy Pryor Roussel.

Bill was passionate about both business and his community. He served on the boards of First Community Bank and First Security Bank, the Member Foundation board at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, the Board of Governors for White County Memorial Hospital and as vice chair of the Arkansas Racing Commission. He also held the title of president for the Searcy chapter of the Kiwanis Club and was lieutenant governor of Division 17 of Kiwanis International, encompassing Arkansas and Missouri. Bill was active in politics most of his life, but was especially proud of being the county campaign chairman for Governor Winthrop Rockefeller. While raising his kids, he was instrumental in forming Searcy's youth basketball league and could be found coaching baseball and softball teams through Searcy's rec leagues.

He came to know Christ at Sunnyvale General Baptist Church in Malden, Mo. and spent the majority of his life as a member at First Baptist Church of Searcy. Bill believed wholeheartedly in serving his church's widows, for whom he hosted bi-annual dinners for a decade in his later life. He was a proud member of the Cal Aclin Sunday school class and enjoyed teaching his peers on Sunday mornings.

In his later life, when he could no longer travel, Bill and his wife, Amy, enjoyed spending time on their farm down his favorite tree-lined road. He loved to

read, sit outside and watch the birds and other wildlife around their home. A life-long learner, he consistently read three newspapers a day and was always seeking ways to grow his knowledge about the world. One of his favorite subjects to research was his French heritage, which he took great pride in.

Bill's love for his family rose above all. He proudly raised all his children in Searcy after moving his first four kids – Pamela, Michele, Scott and Phillip – there from Jonesboro in 1963. After marrying his sweetheart, Amy Roussel, she gave birth to his fifth child, Anna, in 1999 when Bill was 71 years old. He was proud to be a father and watch his children grow, no matter his age.

He is preceded in death by his mother, Beulah House Roussel; his father, Norman Roussel; his brother, Edward Max Roussel and many other half siblings; father and mother-in-law, Bill and Patsy Pryor; and great grandson, Nicholas Wasniewski. Bill is survived by his wife of 29 years, Amy; five children, Pamela Roussel Lowery (David), Michele Roussel Wasson (Ken), Scott Roussel (Laura), Phillip Roussel (Robin Joseph) and Anna Roussel; nine grandchildren, Ben Lowery (Rebekah), Kenny Wasson, Sean Lowery (Kimberly), Blake Roussel (Amanda), Michael Wasson (Sarah), Amanda Roussel Baker (Will), Daniel Lowery (Haley), Racheal Roussel Wasniewski (Toby) and Madalyn Roussel Spencer (Clayton); 25 great grandchildren; two sisters-in-law, Sue Roussel and Amy Pryor; two brothers-in-law, Bruce Pryor and Matt Pryor; five nieces, Sharon House, Ann Sterling Thompson, Celia Roussel Cyrkiel, Vivian Pryor and Emily Pryor; and five nephews, Robert Roussel, Billy Max Williams (Betty), Les Roussel, John Roussel (Karen) and Ethan Pryor.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to First Baptist Church of Searcy toward their Faith House Missions and Ministry Center or to the Remembering Nicholas Foundation.

Funeral services will be conducted on Sunday, February 23, 2025, at 2:30pm, at First Baptist Church in Searcy. Visitation will be held prior to the service, beginning at 1:00pm. Entombment will follow in Oaklawn Memorial Gardens.

Arrangements are entrusted to Powell Funeral Home of Searcy. www.powellfuneralhome.net

Cemetery Details

Oaklawn Memorial Gardens

100 E. Moore Ave.
Searcy, AR 72143

Previous Events

Visitation

FEB 23. 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church, Searcy
Spring & Center Sts.
Searcy, AR 72143

Funeral Service

FEB 23. 2:30 PM (CT)

First Baptist Church, Searcy
Spring & Center Sts.
Searcy, AR 72143

Entombment

FEB 23 (CT)

Oaklawn Memorial Gardens
100 E. Moore Ave.
Searcy, AR 72143

Tribute Wall



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Billy Rex Roussel.*



February 19 at 02:54 PM



“ *During our time in Seracy we were impressed with such a congenial man who seemed to always look at the good things in life instead of the negative. He always wore a smile and was ready to talk about his family ever chance he had. Bill truly was a man of accomplishments that happened because he seemed to always want to act as he ththought Jesus would act. We enjoyed his parties and laughter. Dr Dennis and Regina Bennett*

Dennis Bennett - February 27, 2025 at 08:47 AM



“ *The Slone Family purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Billy Rex Roussel.*



The Slone Family - February 22, 2025 at 06:36 PM



“ *David &. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Billy Rex Roussel.*

David &. - February 22, 2025 at 01:18 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Billy Rex Roussel.

February 21, 2025 at 07:25 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Billy Rex Roussel.



February 21, 2025 at 07:25 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Billy R. Roussel.

February 21, 2025 at 01:33 PM



“ Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Billy Rex Roussel.



February 21, 2025 at 01:33 PM



“ When I saw all the books at Bill's house I asked him who his favorite author was and he said Louis L'Amour. I read the Hondo and was hooked. I am now almost finished reading every book he wrote. I am thankful to have met Bill.

Dean P Wasniewski - February 21, 2025 at 10:30 AM

AR

Thank you for that memory Dean. He was a life long reader fiction and non-fiction. Louis L'Amour was one of his favorites.

Amy Roussel - February 21, 2025 at 09:12 PM

YG

“ *Your home group purchased the Small Garden Dish for the family of Billy Rex Roussel.*



Your home group - February 21, 2025 at 08:03 AM

KC

“ *Kalynn Jackson & The team at Cornerstone planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Billy R. Roussel.*

Kalynn Jackson & The team at Cornerstone - February 20, 2025 at 08:07 PM

KC

“ *Kalynn Jackson & The team at Cornerstone purchased the Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum for the family of Billy Rex Roussel.*



Kalynn Jackson & The team at Cornerstone - February 20, 2025 at 08:07 PM