



William Donelson

Alton | Wednesday, January 4 2017

William Allen (Bill) Donelson died peacefully January 4, 2017, in Alton, Illinois. He was born December 25, 1926, in Palmyra, Missouri, to Marie Irene (Cary) and George Roy Donelson. He married Virginia Carolyn Boling June 18, 1950, in Hannibal, Missouri. She preceded him in death in 2002. Bill is survived by three daughters and their families, Barbara Hoelscher (John) of Alton, IL; Kiki Osterman of Sherman, TX; and Judi Derks (Clif) of Lenexa, KS. Bill graduated from Hannibal High School in 1944 when he joined the U.S. Army and proudly served in the infantry and military police in the Philippines during World War II. Following the war, Bill attended Texas A & M University and Hannibal LaGrange College, then graduated from the University of Missouri in Columbia in 1950 with a degree in Business Administration. President Harry Truman delivered the commencement address. After Bill and Virginia married, they moved to Centralia, IL, where Bill worked as an accountant for B.F. Goodrich. In 1953 he took a position with US Steel in the Chicago area that allowed him to work on the very first commercial computer, the Univac. That experience eventually led to a 24-year career with Burroughs Corporation in St. Louis, as a systems analyst and later as an education specialist where he traveled the country training employees and clients. After retirement from Burroughs, Bill worked for the St. Louis Junior College District, the State of Missouri, and Zee Corporation. Bill was a lifelong St. Louis Cardinals Fan, attending his first game at Sportsman's Park at age 6. Also a fan of the St. Louis Browns, Bill served as an officer of the Browns Fan Club until his health no longer permitted. He was a fan of all sports and had a remarkable knowledge of statistics and facts related to games and players. Bill had been a Golden Gloves boxer, and boxing was his greatest sports passion. He loved training young athletes in the ring and was active in boxing clubs in St. Louis and in Hannibal. Bill was an active member of Northside Christian Church in St. Louis, serving over the years as deacon, elder, Sunday School teacher and ultimately Elder Emeritus. He was always a cheerful supporter of his girls' school events and church activities. Bill is also survived by grandchildren Erika (Dan) Cohn and Carrie Hoelscher of St. Louis; Jack (Kelli) Hoelscher of Mechanicsburg, PA; Dr. Katie (Brian) Boswell of Round Rock, TX; Michael Osterman

of Plano, TX; Michelle Osterman and Dane Osterman of Austin, TX; Meredith Derks and Natalie Derks of Lenexa, KS; and Allison (Ryan) Thornton of Roeland Park, KS; great-granddaughters June and Elsie Boswell; and Ellis Mae Hoelscher. Visitation will be at 1:00 p.m. until time of funeral service at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, January 7, 2017 at Gent Funeral Home, 2409 State St., Alton, IL, 62002. Burial will be private at Grand View Cemetery in Hannibal, MO. Memorials may be made to Hannibal LaGrange College in care of Gent Funeral Home. Online guestbook and information may be found at www.gentfuneralhome.com