



William Matthis

Godfrey | Sunday, October 28 2012

William Craig “Bill” Matthis, formerly of Litchfield, passed away on October 28, 2012. He was born March 18, 1921 in Pineville, KY, the fifth of eight children of Chester and Rose (Gamp) Matthis. He grew up in Bell and Harlan Counties in southeast Kentucky. Bill loved all things mechanical, and in 1940 he enlisted in the Army Air Corps and trained as an airplane mechanic. After serving at air bases in Illinois, Tennessee, South Carolina and Alabama, Bill’s squadron served in the China-Burma-India Theater. He and his fellow troops sailed across the Pacific Ocean to India in 1943. They supported the aircraft “flying the hump” into China and the construction of the Burma Road. Bill remained in contact with his Army Air Corps friends throughout his life. After his discharge, he returned to his native Kentucky and married his longtime sweetheart Axie Marsee and worked as an electrician in the coal mines. He moved his family to Illinois in 1964 and continued his work in the coal mines, ending his career as a chief electrician. Bill embraced life. He fed birds, built and installed bluebird houses and martin boxes. He volunteered for, and supported efforts to restore the natural prairie land along Shoal Creek in central Illinois. For many years he chopped his own wood, heating his house and water with wood burning stoves. He was an inveterate vegetable gardener, square dancer and private airplane pilot. For many years he was an involved member of both the Butler Union Church and First Presbyterian Church of Litchfield, serving as an elder in both churches. For more than 40 years he took great pleasure in supporting the Christian Children’s Fund (now Child Fund International), through which he helped provide food, clothing, shelter and education for many children in the Philippines. Bill was a good friend to many; a good, honorable and decent gentleman and a wonderful husband, father and grandfather. He was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers Kenneth, Chester and Gene Matthis; sisters Katrine Bailey and Frances Owens and his wife Axie Marsee Matthis. He is survived by daughters Jane Matthis of Goodyear, AZ and Ann Lawson (William) of Alton; sisters Rose Parsons of Gainesville, GA and Ruth Stifel of Toledo, OH, as well as grandchildren, Adam Lawson (Tricia) of Pittsburgh, PA, and Beth Lawson St. Peters (Daniel) of Alton; one great-grandchild, Katelyn St. Peters, and many nieces and nephews. A memorial service will

be held at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, November 3, 2012 at First Presbyterian Church in Litchfield with flag presentation given by Barton Rogers of the American Legion Post 436, followed by a light lunch in the fellowship hall. A private interment will follow at Edgewood Cemetery in Litchfield. In lieu of flowers the family suggests memorial contributions to Child Fund International, 2821 Emerywood Parkway, Richmond, VA 23294, 800-776-6767 (www.childfund.org/donation) or Butler Union Church, Butler, IL. Gent Funeral Home in Alton is in charge of arrangements. Online guestbook and information may be found at www.gentfuneralhome.com