



# William Pankey

JUN 6, 1921 - DEC 22, 2013



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MEMORIAL PARK  
Funeral Home & Cemetery

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# William Pankey

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**W**illiam Louis Pankey “Bill”, “Big Bill”, “Billy”, died December 22, 2013 after a prolonged battle with old age and a few illnesses. Born June 6th 1921 in Jonesboro, AR to Addie and Bernard Pankey, Billy lived in Arkansas for most of his childhood. He found his entrepreneurial spirit early in Little Rock, when at age 6, he sold his first quart container of blueberries for 20 cents and felt wealthy. In 1936 the family moved to Memphis. He attended Tech High School and excelled in his academics, football, and Navy ROTC. His first business in high school was selling cars during his spare time. In June of 1939, he graduated and went to play football at Memphis State College under the coach Cecil “Sonny” Humphreys. When World War II broke out, he suspended his studies and football, joined the Navy and was stationed in San Diego where he worked as a aviation technician. From this work, he found his love for watches and eventually jewelry which led to the start of Pankey Diamond Jewelry in 1947 after a stint at Pearl and Lowensteins. As a career alternative, Bill enrolled and graduated with honors from the Southern Law School in 1952 as President of his graduating class. For the next 60 years, Bill worked in the jewelry and diamond business starting downtown and then moving east to 4515 Poplar where he began his day having coffee at the Gridiron and holding court. In his spare time, he actively supported and followed Memphis State football and basketball, and attended numerous sporting events around the world. This was in addition to numerous Boy Scout campouts, canoe trips on the Spring River, school plays and school athletic events with the kids. His greatest asset in life and business was his partner Susie Cooper who became Mrs. Pankey in 1978. Susie accompanied Big Bill where ever he went and was his most dedicated fan. He is survived by his sister, Betty Cannon and his sons and daughter. Ron Pankey and his wife Margie; Chip Pankey and his wife Janis and Bill’s oldest grandson, Sam; Jud Pankey and his wife Julie and their two children Marguerite Elizabeth and William Judd; Phil Beard



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and his wife Donna and their daughter Kim Wilson and her two children, Claire and Nathan and Betsy Dooley and her children Emma and Owen. Bill never met a stranger in the shop on Poplar and found many life long friends through the business. His smile, his jokes and the twinkle in his eye were hallmarks of his personality as he took care of generations of customers with Susie at his side. They retired in 2007 to enjoy each other's company. Bill when not traveling could be found on most mornings having coffee at the Burger King, or Oak Court Mall with the Dead Peckers Club. Visitation with the family is at Memorial Park Chapel at 5668 Poplar Avenue on Tuesday December 24 between 4-7 p.m. Funeral services will be held Thursday, December 26 at 1 p.m. at Memorial Park Chapel with a committal service immediately following. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that any donations be sent to the charity of one's choice. Memorial Park Funeral Home, "Behind the stone wall", 901-767-8930. Condolences may be offered at [www.MemorialParkOnline.com](http://www.MemorialParkOnline.com)



## Tribute Wall

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KW

**Kim, Tom, Nathan, And Claire Wilson** posted:

Kim, Tom, Nathan, and Claire Wilson purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of William Pankey.

December 25 at 3:13 PM

MP

**Memorial Park** posted:

Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of William Pankey.

December 24 at 7:41 AM

KW

**Karen Walters** posted:

Our thoughts and prayers are with The Pankey Family. We are very sorry for your loss. The Walters of Dallas

December 23 at 1:20 PM

SA

**Steven Abney** posted:

Romans 14:8 For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. We are heartily sorry for your loss. May God comfort you with His peace and assurance. Deirdre and Steve Abney, Plano, TX

December 23 at 10:14 AM

ME

**Monte Emerson** posted:

Joan and I just heard about Bill. Our hearts and prayers are with Sue, Phil and the rest of the family. Monte Emerson

December 22 at 12:12 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring William by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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