



William "Bill" L. Voorhies

December 10, 1931 - May 24, 2026

William (Bill) L. Voorhies, age 94, and a resident of Fort Collins, passed away very peacefully on the morning of May 24, 2026. Bill was born on December 10, 1931 in Speedway, Indiana to John and Ada Voorhies. Bill was the youngest of seven children.

During the Great Depression, to maintain employment during a difficult time for the country, Bill's family moved several times, to locations within Indiana and Ohio. During World War II, even though he had seven kids, Bill's father served in war zones throughout Europe. In spite of Bill's initial 14 years spanning the Great Depression and World War II, he always spoke in very fond terms about his childhood.

As a young boy, Bill developed an independent spirit, and a work ethic, that served him well throughout his life. From a very young age, Bill worked at a variety of jobs so that he could always have money in his pocket. A favorite job from this phase of Bill's life was working on a large horse farm outside of Speedway—which led to a lifelong love of horses, including his all-time favorite horse, Rowdy. Later in Bill's life, as a father and grandfather, Rowdy would be immortalized in bedtime stories that Bill shared with his kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids.

In his later grade school years, Bill's family settled in Ashtabula, Ohio. The

Ashtabula portion of Bill's youth was also very important as it was in Ashtabula that Bill met and began courting Barbara Jane Ottman. During his high school years, in addition to other pursuits, Bill was active in the school's vocal music program. Next to Bill's picture in the high school yearbook, he was described as a "torrid tenor." His passion for singing would continue throughout his life.

The family isn't sure of its origins, but, somewhere along the line, Bill developed a habit of whistling to himself that carried on throughout his life. In fact, it became kind of a calling card of Bill's. Not only, for example, did it allow Barbara to locate Bill if they were shopping and became separated, but it also turned out to be a way that even friends and strangers knew that Bill was in the vicinity. We're not even sure he was always aware that he was whistling, but it is an enduring memory that we all cherish.

After graduation from Ashtabula High School in 1949, Bill briefly attended college and worked in the local rail yards. In 1951, Bill enlisted in the Air Force and spent most of his "hitch" stationed at a joint RAF-USAF base in the southeastern part of England. Bill was part of a unit that had responsibility for maintaining aircraft on the base.

When he wasn't on duty, Bill enjoyed becoming part of a barbershop quartet called "The Flying Eight Balls," made up of fellow Air Force buddies. Bill's quartet became quite successful—travelling and performing in many competitions, and even cutting a record. Bill's time in the quartet also allowed him to establish lifelong friendships with several of the quartet members.

During a leave, in the summer of 1953, Bill and Barbara married in Ashtabula. Barbara joined Bill in England for the remainder of his tour of duty, which ended in 1954. During the latter portion of Bill's time in England, he and Barbara developed a love for the area that carried on throughout their married life and retirement years.

When Bill returned to the US, he and Barbara ended up in Columbus, OH so that Bill could begin pursuing a degree at The Ohio State University. During his undergraduate days, Bill and Barbara began a family, welcoming daughter Robin in 1955 and son Mark in 1959. Bill graduated from OSU in 1959 with a degree in mechanical engineering.

After graduation, Bill and Barbara returned to Ashtabula and Bill worked building houses with a brother-in-law of whom Bill was very fond. This period of Bill's career was very enjoyable and it sparked a love for building things that carried on throughout the remainder of his life.

In the early 1960's, Bill took a job with Martin Marietta and the family relocated to Orlando, FL. Bill enjoyed being a part of work groups that supported early US space programs, such as the Mercury and Gemini projects. During the time in Orlando, Bill completed an MBA program at Rollins College.

1966 was a very significant year in Bill's life as he took a job with Eastman Kodak that involved moving the family to Rochester, NY. Bill would spend the rest of his career with Kodak. More importantly, however, in 1966, daughter Rebecca (Becky) was born. It was also during 1966, that Bill quit smoking cigarettes, which turned out to be a very important health decision in his life.

In 1971, Bill's Kodak career took the family to northern Colorado, when a new manufacturing plant was opened in Windsor. The family settled in Fort Collins, and Bill continued working for Kodak until his retirement in the late 1980s. During his time in Fort Collins, Bill joined the local barbershop quartet chapter, which he enjoyed greatly.

In retirement, Bill and Barbara enjoyed time with family and friends. They also

enjoyed building 2 cabins in the mountains west of Fort Collins. Cherished trips to England, and to various locations in Europe, were also a very important part of Bill's (and Barbara's) retirement years.

After a few years of spending part of a year in Colorado and part of a year in Florida, Bill and Barbara spent most of their remaining 71 years of marriage—yes, 71 years—living full-time in Florida. Those years of his retirement life were among Bill's favorites.

Health issues prompted a move back to Fort Collins in 2021, so that they could be closer to family. While Bill greatly missed the weather in Florida, he and Barbara were grateful to spend their remaining years near their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Bill was preceded in death by his beloved Barbara, his parents, all 6 of his siblings, and a cherished granddaughter. He is survived by his three children, four grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren, all of whom were very special to "Popper" (Bill's grandpa "handle"). He is also survived by a number of relatives from his and Barbara's respective family trees—including his dear sister-in-law Ruth--all of whom meant a great deal to Bill.

After Barbara passed in 2024, Bill was very grateful for the love and support he received from family and friends. In his final month of life, Bill was also very grateful for the care he received from the staffs at The Medical Center of the Rockies, Centre Avenue Rehab and Health, and Pathways Hospice.

Bill often said that he'd had "very blessed life." A celebration of Bill's life will be held at First Presbyterian Church in Fort Collins, although the details of that event have not yet been finalized. Interment will be in the First Presbyterian Church's columbarium beside his beloved Barbara.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, donations of any amount to a hospice provider in your local area, such as Pathways Hospice in Fort Collins, would have been very meaningful to Bill.