



William "Bill" Powell

September 5, 2025

Our man, our myth, our legend, William "Bill" Powell passed away September 5, 2025 in his own home at the young age of 103 years and 11 months. Bill was born in Amherst, Ohio to John Powell and Gail Cochensparger. He was raised in the town of Elyria, Ohio experiencing all the joys of small town life. He and his guy friends created the 11th Street Gang, spending their days playing baseball, skating on the frozen river and going for adventures in Cascade Park. In high school Bill participated in football, wrestling and playing the xylophone.

Bill was in college when December 7, 1941 changed the world. As was expected, Bill enlisted choosing the Army Air Corp. He earned his wings and at the young age of 23, became a pilot of a B-24. In August of 1944 he headed with his crew to the European Theatre, stationed in Italy.

On his ninth mission in October, 1944 after a bombing mission over Munich, Bill's plane was damaged when the lead ship exploded. The shrapnel killed his co-pilot and took off Bill's headrest. Realizing he lacked the power to cross back over the Alps, Bill gave the order to bail out. So, in early October, Bill became a guest of the Third Reich at Stalag Luft One on the Baltic. Bill spent 7 months as a POW until liberated by the Russians in May 1945.

In June he secured passage on a troop ship back to the United States.

In July he married his long time princess, as he called her, Norma Jeanne Rogers.

Upon his return Bill was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and in 2019

he was awarded the Legion of Honor Medal from France for his role in liberating France.

Bill continued his education at Ohio Northern University graduating with a degree in Civil Engineering in 1947. Bill, Jeanne and their young son James (Jim) moved to Hialeah, Florida where the jobs were. He began working for Dade County Public Works as a surveyor. In 1948, their daughter, Barbara, joined the family.

Fast forward 30 plus years where Bill rose through the ranks to become the Director of Public Works for Miami-Dade County. Upon his retirement after 38 years , Bill was honored when the county named the newly completed bridge after him - the William M. Powell Bridge. The bridge spans Biscayne Bay connecting Miami with Key Biscayne. It is the tallest bridge between Miami and Virginia, runners love its challenge as the only real elevation in South Florida.

Bill and Jeanne always kept a summer home in Fort Collins, Colorado to be closer to their daughter and grandson. After Jeanne's passing in 2003, he made it his permanent home.

Bill loved to travel and travel he did. He made many trips to visit his son in Kauai, and over the years he visited all of the 50 states, Canada, Europe, Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico.

Bill's sense of humor, dry wit and contagious smile will be remembered by all who had the honor of knowing him. Each morning he would wake up singing "On the Sunny Side of the Street" and that is how he lived his life, always in the sunshine, always smiling.

Bill is survived by his son Jim (Mona) of Lihue, Kauai; his daughter, Barbara Vowles of Fort Collins; his grandson Tim (Nicole) of Fort Collins; four great-grands - Will, Owen, Molly and Abby; and seven special great -grands Kellon, Aislyn, Charlie, Stirling, Ridge, Kira and Novin. He is also survived by two nephews; Chuck and Brent Smith.

A special thank you goes to the Visiting Angels who were Bill's companions for more than three years. They brought joy and laughter to his daily routine

and he to theirs. Special thanks also to Missy and Hannah his P.T.s.

Bill's life was celebrated in October, on his birthday weekend with 80 of his closest family and friends.

His advice was simple: keep exercising, laugh often, drink Coke and eat ice cream every day.

Here's to a life well lived and a legacy that will live on through the ages.