



## William John Raymond

March 27, 1944 - October 31, 2024

William "Bill" Raymond

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Bill Raymond, 80 was born to Eleanor and William Raymond in Oakland, California at a military hospital while his father was in Southeast Asia at the end of World War II. During his early years the family was moving frequently due to engineering positions that led his father to work in many of the major manufacturing cities in the northern U.S. Summers were the opportunity for Bill to spend with his grandparents Alphonse and Edna Ginther in Williston, North Dakota. Billy Jack always considered that to be his home.

Bill was an artist from the very beginning drawing trucks and cars on any scrapes of paper or books he could find. He also had an immense passion for trains, motorcycles, animals, music, and the blues. His younger brothers would always sneak into Billy's room looking for hidden items and playing with his train set. He always knew that the twins had been in his room and helped hone his skill of observation and attention to detail.

In the early 1960s, the family moved to Dallas, Texas where his father worked for Texas Instruments. Bill soon began attending Jesuit High School. This is where he would meet his lifelong friend, Jack Crane. Bill got Jack hooked on fishing and the two of them would spend time fishing for bass on several Texas lakes and ponds.

The summer after high school graduation he went again back to Williston to live with his grandparents. This is when he met the love of his life, Avis. What

started as casual hanging out with friends sparked something inside his tough exterior. Bill attended his first year of college at the University of Dallas before deciding the southern lifestyle was not for him. He left and went home to Williston. This is where he was reunited with AV (as he affectionally called her) when he ran into her one night at the bowling alley with her mother and one of her sisters. She had returned from Cosmetology School in Billings, Montana. Bill's grandfather strongly encouraged him to go back to college. He applied to several colleges in the intermountain west. Northern Arizona University was the first one to start in the fall. Bill married Avis in August 1964 then soon after their adventure in the southwest desert began. Cora Sue was born shortly thereafter as Bill worked on his anthropology degree. Upon earning his bachelor's degree from NAU 1968, Bill applied and was accepted into The Horace M. Albright Training Center for the National Park Service located near the South Rim headquarters of Grand Canyon National Park. After several rotations at various National Parks in the southwest U.S., and his oldest daughter soon to start school, Bill longed to be closer to his home in North Dakota.

Once again Bill turned to education and started working on his master's degree. Shortly after Sarah was born, he graduated in November 1973 with a Master of Science in education from North Dakota State University. He worked for the North Dakota Job Services in New Town to develop new training assessments to help identify skillsets for the native population. Bill was known to be kind and caring. Eventually he relied on his training from the National Park Service to work in law enforcement.

Once his youngest daughter was school age, Bill moved the family to Fargo, North Dakota to seek better employment from his college network. This is where Bill's artistic talent blossomed. Not unlike a scene from the Coen Brothers' movie Fargo, Bill started drawing and painting pictures. He entered the North Dakota State Centennial Stamp competition. He was not as fortunate as Norm Gunderson and did not get a consolation prize of a 3-cent stamp. Although, the winner of the stamp that year (1989) had similar

elements to the one Bill had drawn; Wildgoose Illustrations was born.

This artistic path led him to design numerous paintings of wildlife, scenes from his time in the desert, and eventually to automotive body shops where he earned the nickname "Slowhand" due to his patience in being able to hand pinstripe vehicles and motorcycles. Eventually, he started to paint customized gas tanks that ranged from simple with just pinstriping to more elaborate airbrushing geometric patterns culminating to replication of complex 70s rock album covers.

His youngest daughter's graduation from high school allowed Bill and Avis to leave Fargo and head west to Montana to be closer to one of his younger brothers. Eventually the couple moved into a house in the community of Lolo, 11 miles south of Missoula, Montana. This became their sanctuary and piece of paradise with fishing right in their backyard. Bill continued his artistic talents and worked with several realtors creating large property sale signs. The couple lived there until AV was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2002. Gone too soon.

Bill languished without his partner and struggled for several more years. In 2012, a black and white furball was delivered and gave him a renewed purpose. Taffy eventually came out of hiding and started playing pool with him in the garage. Bill now had someone to listen to all of his stories. Shortly thereafter he decided that he would like to move to Deer Lodge, Montana. Moving to Deer Lodge, Bill often referred to it as a community much like Williston (before the oil boom, obviously). He embraced the new community and worked hard to connect to people around town. Whether it was in the aisles of Valley Foods or other Main Street businesses, he often had a smile and story to share. Bill could often be seen walking with his fishing rod to hike into the Grant-Kohrs National Historic Site to fish on the Clark Fork River. He often boasted about the number of miles and size of the fish he caught (and released).

Bill had many interests besides fishing, drawing, and storytelling. Bill loved to

watch and listen to hockey. Lively political bantering and debates were always a way to engage in intellectual conversations. He was the family cook and enjoyed barbecuing on outdoor grills and smokers. This was evidenced by his "Best Brisket" Award at the inaugural Piggly Wiggly Cook-off (now Cookin' on the Clark Fork) in Deer Lodge. His baby-back pork ribs and BBQ chicken were notorious in the Lolo neighborhood, as was his experimenting with homebrew before Montana's local industry beer took off.

Bill was a renaissance man and had deep beliefs. He was happy in Deer Lodge and often wished that he and AV would have found this place sooner. Bill died the way he wanted in his home and had prepared others what to expect. His soul unhindered by his physical body is zooming around and seeing all of the things and getting answers for all of life's mysteries. Those left behind are sad, but this too shall pass.

Bill is survived by his daughters, Cora Sue (Frank) Legg of Port Barre, LA and Sarah (Jim Decker) Raymond of Deer Lodge, MT; granddaughter Tiphonie Legg, great-grandsons Connor and Jayce Savoy; and granddaughter Alicia (Nic) LeMarie, great-grandchildren Autumn, Nixon, and Arden LeMarie; his twin brothers Gary (Kathleen) Raymond of Upland, CA and Greg Raymond of White Sulphur Springs, MT and his beloved cat Taffy.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, please donate to your local food pantry or humane society in memory of William "Bill" Raymond. Cremation has taken place. A celebration of his life will be conducted in the Summer of 2025 and will be announced.

# Tribute Wall



“ 12 files added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Wayrynen-Richards Funeral Home** - November 07, 2024 at 02:51 PM