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9-27-2018

Billy (Bill) Merlyn Cox

Billy (Bill) Merlyn Cox, 85, died peacefully at home on Wednesday, June 27, 2018. A celebration of Bill's life will be held at his home north of Blue Springs, Missouri, on Saturday, October 13, 2018. His children are hosting an open house from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Bill was born May 22, 1933, on the family farm in the Rock Creek Township of Jasper County, Iowa, to Floyd Alvin and Elizabeth Jane (Koon) Cox. He would later tell stories to his children of sleeping on the open oven door on cold nights, of working a team of mules, and his pet raccoon Skeezer, who would accompany

him while riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle. Bill lived with his older sister in town while attending Grinnell Community Senior High School. Bill later sold the motorcycle to buy his future bride, Charlotte Ilene Garwood, a wedding ring. Their marriage took place on October 12, 1952, at the Little Brown Church in Nashua, Iowa, lasting 59 years until Charlotte's death on July 5, 2012.

Charlotte was able to accompany Bill during his enlistment of service in the US Army, living in Laupheim, Germany, where he worked in the motor pool disassembling tanks for transfer to the newly rearmed German Army. Upon Bill's discharge they returned to Iowa for a few years where he worked on a farm, at a filling station, and operated a bulldozer, before moving to Kansas City, Missouri, to attend Central Technical Institute. Bill went into the trade of garage door installation and service and after the unexpected death of his business partner, he became shop foreman at Delden Garage Door Manufacturing until his retirement in 1998. Although he never really retired, he returned to running his own installation and service business, with loyal customers keeping him busy until shortly before his death.

In 1973, Bill built a house for his wife and five children on 7+ acres in Eastern Jackson County, Missouri. Bill was an exceptional carpenter, understanding all the trades required to build a home, and did most of the work himself. He was also a very resourceful mechanic and maintained farm equipment at the home. Later, as his children started to drive, he taught them how to maintain and repair their own vehicles. The children enjoyed growing up on the acreage with an assortment of pets and farm animals to play with and care for. Bill and Charlotte always maintained a productive garden and grew an impressive array of shade trees. The home they built remained the center of all extended family activities until their deaths.

Bill and Charlotte traveled extensively, visiting at least 38 countries and all 50 states. They also volunteered at Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center, each completing more than 2,500 hours of service. Bill continued to volunteer after Charlotte's death, building and maintaining bluebird houses, wrapping bareroot sapling trees, and helping with summer skills camp and trash pickup along a stretch of Pink Hill Road that was adopted in Charlotte's honor.

Bill enjoyed going to car and tractor shows and he could spend hours telling stories about the ones he had owned throughout his life. Over the past few years, he acquired a few that are similar to those he had owned in the past.

He was preceded in death by his wife; parents; and siblings, Lois, Everett, Larry and Darla. His older brother Doyle of Rogersville, Missouri, passed away on September 3, 2018. He is survived by siblings Janet Wilderdyke, Woodbine, Iowa, Carol Kinney, Garland, Texas, and Donnie Cox, Tama, Iowa. He is also survived by his five children: Kristy Cox, Littleton, Colorado; Steven Cox, Kansas City, Missouri; Linda (Cox) Dugan and husband Alan, Lee's Summit, Missouri; Michael Cox and fiancée Dawn Poellot, Liberty, Missouri; and Gary Cox and partner Mary Beth Brown, Columbia, Missouri. He has five grandchildren who survive: Staci Dugan, Kyler Cox and partner Jenny Nguyen, Austin Dugan, Kayleigh Cox, and Christopher Cox; two great grandsons: Micah and Niko; and his Wheaten Terrier Toby.

The open house on October 13th will take place at 2714 South Lowe Road, Blue Springs, Missouri. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to "MO Conservation Heritage Foundation - Burr Oak Woods in Memory of Bill Cox" PO Box 366 Jefferson City, MO 65102-0366.