

Bill Emry



Bill Emry, of McAllen, Texas, and formerly of Grinnell, died Friday, February 21, 2020, after a lengthy illness at Rio Grande Regional Hospital.

Born Arthur William Emry on October 19, 1936, in Sioux City, Iowa, Bill grew up with his parents and brother in Fairfield, Iowa. He graduated from Fairfield High School in 1954 and went on to Iowa State Teachers College in Cedar Falls where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in music in 1958. There he met his wife, Verles Elaine Hauge, who he married in May of 1958 in Lake Mills, Iowa. Later, he achieved his Master's Degree in

music education from the University of Northern Iowa. He was a life member of Phi Mu Alpha Symphonia and the NEA.

Bill was well known for his many years as a band director for Schleswig, Iowa (two years), Lake Mills, Iowa (three years), Grinnell, Iowa (13 years) and Donna, Texas. His high school bands won many awards and trophies over the years. His attentive skill at marching band routines were the envy of many band directors across the state. He was so proud of the accomplishments of his former students and was still in correspondence with many of them. In 1976, he moved with his wife and two daughters to Edinburg, Texas, where they owned the Amigo Motel on Highway 281. In 1979, they sold the motel, moved to McAllen and eventually set up business at the Don-Wes Flea Market where he sold music for many decades until they retired in 2016. Bill was known for his connections in the conjunto music circles and for being one of the few who sold a wide range of Tejano music selections.

Bill was a member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in McAllen and an associate member of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), also in McAllen. His faith was strong and he loved attending church and singing.

Bill is survived by his wife, Verles; two daughters, Vonda (Steve) Fowler of Colorado Springs, Colo., and Brenda Rushforth of Fullerton, Calif. He is also survived by seven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. He is preceded in death by both of his parents, Bill and Rose Emry; parents-in-law Ray and Gyda Hauge; brother Bob Emry; and son-in-law Gary Rushforth.

Services and visitation pending at Mittlestadt Funeral Home in Lake Mills, Iowa. Interment will be in Salem Memorial Cemetery in Lake Mills, Iowa.

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