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Billy Joe Caroway

April 23, 1935 - Dec. 1, 2023

Billy Joe Caroway, 88, of Morganton passed away peacefully at his residence Friday, December 1, 2023, after a period of declining health.

Bill was born in Celo, NC, April 23, 1935, to the late Eulas and Carrie Robinson Caroway. He was preceded in death by his wife of 60 years, Janice Coffey Caroway.

Bill grew up in Morganton and graduated from Morganton High School. He excelled and lettered in three sports – basketball, football, and track. After serving 2 years in the U.S. Army, he attended Appalachian State Teachers College, graduating in 1960 with a Bachelor of Science degree. While at Appalachian, Bill played basketball for the Mountaineers for 3 years. He began his teaching career at Stratford Junior High School and Yorktown High School in Arlington, Virginia. In 1963, he returned to Morganton to take the helm as head basketball coach for the Morganton High School Wildcats and to teach physical education and science. In 1973, he earned a master's degree in administration from Appalachian State University and began his 16-year career as principal at Morganton Junior High School. Bill was then named principal of Liberty Middle School and later was appointed Director of Drivers Education for Burke County Public Schools.

Bill was an avid fisherman and enjoyed tying his own flies. He also enjoyed coaching,

attending Freedom High School basketball and football games, and watching the Carolina Tarheels. Above all, Bill's family was his greatest pride and joy. He never missed an opportunity to attend his children or grandchildren's events and celebrate their successes.

Bill was a faithful Christian servant who taught Sunday School for a number of years at First Baptist Church, Morganton. He was loving, kind, selfless, endlessly entertaining, and a forever faithful husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He is survived by his children Deborah McCurry (Jim), Angela Williams (Scott), Traci Riebel (Buddy); grandchildren Andrew Lowdermilk (Eleanor), Patrick Lowdermilk, Jordan Williams Brown (Hunter), Matthew Williams (Bailey), Connor Williams, Katie Riebel, and great-grandchildren Lenoir Lowdermilk and Virginia Mae Lowdermilk.

A celebration of life service will be held at First Baptist Church Morganton on Saturday, December 9, 2023, at 3:00 pm. Military honors will be provided by the NC National Guard. The receiving of friends will be prior to the service from 1:30 pm-3:00 pm in the sanctuary. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to First Baptist Church Morganton, 502 West Union Street, Morganton, NC 28655.

The Caroway family would like to express a heartfelt thank you to Catawba Valley Medical Services, Carolina Caring, and a loving group of caregivers that provided excellent care to Bill at his home.

Sossoman Funeral Home and Crematory Center is assisting the family with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



Tracy. Angie and Deb, I just came across this. I'm so sorry for your loss. We were close neighbors at Castlegate back in the 70s. You were always good neighbors. I pray that the family is doing well and Im sorry for your loss.

–Kristi Bell Gray

I was a caregiver for Janice and Bill Caroway for 3years and we all had a good time weather it be while I was cooking or cleaning up or putting Ms Janice to bed!! We would laugh until we all would cry or our ribs were hurting one!! MS Janice would tell me at night shh be quiet you're going to make her mad meaning Ms Becky and I would make a funny face and we all would start again!!! Mr Bill would get so upset with me because of my language I would talk country hick like and he would always correct me!! Bill Caroway it was an honor to care for you and your wife Ms Janice!! Kimberly

–kimberly bolick

Debbie, I was very sorry to hear about your dad. I have good memories of him from MJHS. He and your mom were always so kind. Blessings to all of your family. Trina Melton Barrier

–Trina Melton Barrier

Just saw this. Mr Bill was Avery nice guy and wonderful patient throughout the

yrs. So sorry for your loss

—Dereama Duckworth

…just for the record Sam Smith put the dead fish in Bill Caroway desk drawer on a Friday afternoon..not good odor Monday morning. Retribution for Mr Bill's tricks..I plead the fifth!!

—Ed Hardin



Caroway family, I'm so sorry I will not be able to attend Bill's receiving. I wanted to let you know how very much I loved and appreciated not only your Dad but your Mother as well. Bill introduced Larry Mull and me and got such a kick out of it. We dated for ten years and still remain close dear friends.,,,,all because of your Dad! Your Dad was so wonderful to me when I went to Liberty. I could always rely on him for help and support. The thing I remember most about Bill was the twinkle in his eyes and great smile. He was always teasing and going on about something!! Your Mom and Dad are together now….as it should be. I send my love and admiration to the Caroway family. Peace and comfort to you. Betty Terrell

—Betty Terrell



Tracy, Angie and Debbie, im so sorry for your loss. Billy Joe was a wonderful friend, mentor and Flyfisherman. He and I fished a lot of places, caught a lot of fish and made a lot of memories. He was a kind man. He'll truly be missed. Thoughts and prayers to your family.

—Jeremy Grady

Bill loved to tell of assisting in recruiting Dr. Jim Richardson to play basketball

for their beloved Mountaineers! ..Bill and a colleague were referees at a Wilks High School game on several occasion. Bill reported back to the Appalachian Mountaineer BB coach! Bill tells the story best

–Ed Hardin

Dear family, It was an honor to serve as your Dad's assistant principal at Liberty(my first administrative position in the Burke County Public Schools.) Mr. Caraway had a tremendous work ethic and set high expectations for his students and staff. Fondly, I recall his love of athletics and joy from a humorous story or joke. However, most of all, I recall his love for his family and dedication to them. Please accept my sincere condolences for your loss. Praying for God's comfort during this difficult time, Susan Pollpeter

–Susan Pollpeter



Dear Caroway family and friends, our deepest condolences on Billy's passing on to his heavenly room. He is a saint that will be remembered for years to come. Blessings as you journey through the grieving process.

–Wayne Giese

I am very sorry to hear of Mr. Caroway's passing. Both he and Mrs. Caroway were teachers of mine. They were both the perfect personalities to be teachers. Stern, but kind; helpful yet they gave you the knowledge and oportunity to learn for yourself. May God bless their family and surround them with peace. Linda (Hogan) Snell

–Linda Hogan Snell

Deborah, I am so sorry to hear your dad's passing. He was a wonderful man and I loved seeing him at Pat's Snack Bar. He always had a smile on his face. Keeping you all in my prayers

you all in my prayers.

–Pam Roths



I am deeply sadden by Bill’s passing. He was a gifted man in many areas. I appreciate his help throughout the years to my mother. As a family member, I am grateful for all that he has done to help others. Bill’s wife, Janice was my father’s first cousin. As educators, they gave back to the community and were responsible for the education of many. As a cousin and fellow educator I am proud to have known Bill. My prayers are with the family. May God Bless and comfort your family during this trying time.

–Judy Clark sherron

Deborah, I am so sorry to hear of your father’s passing. Please accept my sincere condolences. I will keep the entire family in my prayers.

–Bruce Carpenter

Coach Caroway was always upbeat and fair. He had to cut me from the football team because I was too scrawny to compete. It was tough for him. He was a kind man.

–Walter Wall

–Patty Wacaster

He was a man of many talents, including intimidation! I learned that from my time with Billy Jo as my principal, later in Driver's Ed at Lake James on a rickety old bridge, and then as my son's coach Certainly, he was a Morganto n High School legend, a friend to so many students and their families and a great example of a dedicated teacher!

—Glenda Truax0



—jeremy moody

My sympath to all Bills daughters on the occasion of his death. He has joined Tom and they are no longer in pain. Gods blessings on each of you and your families.

—Norma Shuping

Debbie, Tracy, and Angie- so sorry to hear of your dad's passing. He was such a wonderful man! Thought so much of him and your mom. Love and prayers for each of you. So sorry we are committed to a wedding on Saturday at this time. We will continue to keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

—Wilson Sarah

My family and I are all so very sorry for your tremendous loss in the passing of your dad! Billy Joe and Ervin were old friends from Morganton High, Appalachian, and the Burke County School System. Janice and I were at Appalachian together and both became Media Coordinators. Bill and Janice were great educators and wonderful parents! Lynne

—Lynne Hallyburton

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. Ron and Annelle Mulwee

—annelle mulwee



With heartfelt sympathy.

–Jacqueline C. Kanipe



May you rest in peace Billy Joe Kaye (Tolbert)Parker May your family have peace

–Sharon KayeParker