



Billy Gillham

April 5, 1931 - July 28, 2023

Billy D Gillham, 92, of Chelan, WA, passed away on Friday July 28, 2023. Born April 5, 1931 in Wichita, Kansas and adopted by loving parents Luther Albert Gillham and Eva Maude Gillham (Coonfield), he lived on the family farm in Moran, Kansas until the Dust Bowl took its toll and his parents made the decision to pack up and move west in the late 1930's. Settling in the Lake Chelan Valley, his lifelong love of the mountains and rivers he would call home began. He attended school in Chelan and was active in the Boy Scouts, sports, and building hotrods to impress the girls.

In 1952, he was drafted into the US Army and served on the front lines in Korea for 18 months. The experiences of his service and the camaraderie of his fellow soldiers would mold him for the remainder of his life, and he was well known for his thoughts on the freedoms we enjoy because of the sacrifices made by those who served before us. During his time overseas, he exchanged countless letters with a special person he called "that good looking girl back home" and carried her photo in his pocket. That good looking girl was Merry Ann Gillham (Huff) and after driving his hotrod up a rocky mountain road to propose during a family picnic they soon eloped to Post Falls, Idaho to be married at The Hitching Post on November 21, 1955. He called his beautiful bride his best friend and they held hands for 62 adventure filled years until her death on his birthday in 2018. When daughter Robin came along he was overjoyed and from that moment he knew their little family was

complete.

He, with Merry Ann and daughter by his side, had the time of their lives camping, fishing, archery, square dancing, snowmobiling, boating, motorcycle trips, BBQs, picnics, and traveling endless miles in their motorhome with their ever present dachshunds. He cherished his friends and tall tales were told often around the table, campfire, or front porch of their home where everyone was welcome. The laughter was plentiful and the coffee was always on.

He held several jobs throughout his life including surveyor, well driller, and shipping foreman at Blue Chelan where he was known by the crew as "Uncle Billy ". In his retirement he operated a small saw and knife sharpening business and also enjoyed working in his woodshop where he thrived on building or designing new creations. The large yard was filled with colorful wooden critters and projects he built in his beloved shop. He took pride in everything he did and expected the same of others. Always quick to lend a hand and it was unlikely he lacked any tool needed for any task and knew exactly where to find it.....and return it to that precise location. He had a quick wit, mischievous smile, strong determination, an easy laugh, and a love of all things outdoors. He could whip just about anyone in a game of Cribbage and never missed a count with a clever laugh, much to many opponent's dismay Most days in recent years he could be found relaxing in his favorite hideout chair on the deck, feeding the birds and watching for wildlife along the hill. Forever the outdoorsman.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife Merry Ann, his parents, Luther and Eva, and friends he missed dearly in his quiet way.

Billy is survived by his daughter, Robin Gillham of Chelan, WA.

A special thanks to all his neighbors, caregivers, and friends who became

family for all the love and kindness given so freely over the years.

Graveside service and military honors will take place at 11:00am Friday, September 15, 2023 at Riverview Cemetery, 401 Riverview Cemetery Road, Chelan, WA.

A gathering to celebrate a life well lived will follow at Heritage Heights, 505 E Highland Ave, Chelan beginning at 1:30pm.

Arrangements by Chapel of the Valley, East Wenatchee.

Previous Events

Military Honors

SEP **15**. 11:00 AM (PT)

Riverview Cemetery
401 Riverview Cemetery Road
Chelan, WA 98816

Gathering

SEP **15**. 1:30 PM (PT)

Heritage Heights
505 E Highland Ave
Chelan, WA 98816

Tribute Wall

CS

“ *Cindy Sheehey lit a candle in memory of Billy Gillham*



Cindy Sheehey - August 31, 2023 at 09:02 AM

CS

“ *So sorry for your loss Robin, sending many hugs and healing prayers. Cindy Sheehey*



Cindy Sheehey - August 31, 2023 at 07:27 AM

RG

Thank you so much Cindy.

Robin Gillham - September 11, 2023 at 12:55 PM

RS

“ Dear Robin,

I am so sorry to learn of your dad's passing. Please accept my sincere condolences. You may remember, but I worked with you dad at Blue Chelan about 40 years ago.

Billy was always thoughtful and clear in his communication. As you may remember, you dad was a warehouse manager, and later became our purchasing manager. I trusted your dad, and cared for him. He did an excellent job in whatever task that he was assigned!

Over the years, I lost track of your parents, but I never forgot them. And, boy did they love you! That I remember!

Smile thinking of a good man, life well lived, and his love for you!

My best wishes,

Ron Skagen

Ron Skagen - August 19, 2023 at 09:09 AM

RG

Oh my goodness what a lovely message. Thank you Ron. Of course I remember you and my dad spoke of you often. My folks adored your family. Your words are so kind and thoughtful. Thank you. Robin

Robin Gillham - September 11, 2023 at 12:54 PM

SM

“ Sheryl McCormack lit a candle in memory of Billy Gillham



Sheryl McCormack - August 12, 2023 at 02:11 PM