



William "Bill" Edward Caswell

July 12, 1944 - February 16, 2023

Our dearly beloved William Edward (Bill) Caswell, age 78, passed away peacefully on February 16, 2023, surrounded by family and close friends. Bill was born in Austin, Texas, on July 12, 1944, to Edward C. Caswell and Louise Strohe Caswell. The family moved to Bartlesville, Oklahoma, when Bill was only two. He attended Highland Park School, running away on the first day of first grade because the snacks and naps he had grown accustomed to during kindergarten were suddenly missing from the program. Bill ultimately graduated from Bartlesville College High in 1962. Earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Radio and TV Broadcasting from the University of Oklahoma, Bill was preparing for a career in advertising. However, his immediate plans were interrupted as the United States Army required his service from September 12, 1967, to August 20, 1969. Bill served one tour in Vietnam with the 4th Infantry Division. He obtained the rank of First Lieutenant and earned several medals, including the Army Commendation Medal. After returning home from the war, Bill worked in advertising for approximately ten years. During this part of his life, he was married to Mary Dale Province. They had one son, Zachary. Bill eventually moved to Los Angeles, California, to pursue a lifelong dream—a career in music, singing and writing songs. During this pursuit, Bill met Kin Vassy, another songwriter. Together they wrote, “Kentucky Homemade Christmas,” a song recorded by Kenny Rogers on Rogers’ first Christmas album that was released in 1981. “Kentucky Homemade Christmas,” was also

Rogers' first holiday single and the album went "Platinum" in just three weeks. The success of this release helped Bill relocate to Nashville, Tennessee, writing for Jensing Music Company.

In 1983, Bill appeared on the PBS music television program, Austin City Limits, with Guy Clark, John Prine, Billy Joe Shaver, Rodney Crowell, and Keith Sykes. During this "Songwriters Showcase" episode, Bill performed two of his original songs, "Sodbuster" and "Don't Tell Mama (I'm a guitar picker)." His musical prowess also led to appearances on Hee Haw and A Prairie Home Companion.

While working in Nashville, Bill met the love of his life, Rosemary, who became affectionately known as "Rosi" or just simply, "Babe." Their shared interests quickly led to writing and performing together. Marriage on August 7, 1984, soon followed. Their compatibility was uncanny. For forty years, they had the good fortune of being together almost continuously. It was truly the best of times in both of their lives.

The duo often performed on rare old-style instruments including the ukelele, mandolin-guitar, bell-harp, and tremolo. Playing music at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, for three seasons and Nashville Opryland KOA for nine seasons, Bill and Rosi amassed over 5,000 shows together throughout the United States and even performed in a music festival in Rome, Italy. An award-winning songwriter, Bill received his share of accolades. He often collaborated with other top country songwriters of his era. One such song, "Just When," was recorded by George Jones on Jones' 1985 album Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes?, and "Somebody To Care," recorded by Tanya Tucker on her 1986 album, Girls Like Me. In June of 1988, Holly Dunn's first single from the album, Across the Rio Grande, was "That's What Your Love Does to Me." This song reached #5 on the Billboard Hot Country Singles and Tracks chart. Jennifer McCarter and The McCarter's first single from their album, Better Be Home Soon, was "Up and Gone." Released in March 1989, this song peaked at #9 on the Billboard Hot Country Singles chart. A Southern Gospel group, The Nelons, recorded "Take Off Those Rags Lazarus" on their

A New Generation album in 1991. This cut reached #1 on the gospel charts.

Released in 1988, "Lucky Dog," co-written with Verlon Thompson, was recorded on Keith Whitley's second album, Don't Close Your Eyes. While Bill enjoyed many successful collaborations, his most significant and rewarding projects may have been with Keith Whitley. Due to Keith's untimely death, Wherever You Are Tonight, was released posthumously in 1995. Three songs, co-written with Whitley, appeared on this album, including the first tract, "I'm Losing You All Over Again."

Bill's brand of story-telling will never be forgotten. It was born out of a love for family, an appreciation of hard work, sacrifice, and most of all the love for the simple things in life such as growing up on the family's wheat farm that ultimately transformed into his pride and joy, the beautiful pecan orchard nestled on either side of the Caney River. "Sodbuster," a song based on his grandfather's farm life in western Kansas and "Sweet Allis Chalmers," a song about an old tractor he drove countless hours while growing up on the family farm defined this man and the things he valued most. "Oklahoma Backroads" captured his respect for the culture and history of his beloved home state. In 1995, Bill returned home to help care for his aging parents. Even while maintaining the family commercial pecan operation, Bill and his lovely wife were able to continue sharing their music around the region. His favorite pastime was "Junkin," a term coined to describe the love of antique shops and flea markets. The significance of his collections can only be measured by the enjoyment of the pursuit and the historical preservation of connections to the past. Bill was a student of history and never stopped learning. His ability to share meaningful information with historical significance was usually faster and possibly even more reliable than Google.

Although Bill was a master storyteller, he would often sit quietly listening to conversation before suddenly jumping in to deliver one of his patented, and always hilarious, one-liners. Family and friends were always eager for Bill to

take the lead so he could share the colorful stories of his life. His slow and methodical delivery, coupled with a deep pitched soothing voice, kept serious listeners on the edge of their seats.

Bill leaves behind a legacy of love.....a love of God, family, friends, music, and country. He will be sorely missed by family and friends but will always be remembered with great love and respect for the life he lived and the peace and certainty exhibited as he passed from it. Whenever you are enjoying the peaceful beauty of the great outdoors, admiring a gorgeous sunset over the Osage, or just listening to beautiful music, smile and think of him.

Bill Caswell was preceded in death by his father, Edward C. Caswell; his mother, Louise S. Caswell; and his sister, Kay C. Thompson. He is survived by his wife, Rosemary (Rosi) Caswell; his son, Zachary P. Caswell; three grandchildren, Zoe, Alex, and Emma Caswell; nieces and nephews, Robyn Guthrie and husband, Jonathan; Chris Whittington and wife, Jo Ann; Monica Slater and husband, Chris; Greg Choate and wife, Camille; Matt Thompson and wife, Brandi; Chuck Choate; and a multitude of great nieces and nephews.

A celebration of life will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 25, 2023, at Stumpff Funeral Home in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. A reception will immediately follow at Stumpff. For those who may be unable to attend, please click the following link to watch the service via live stream : <https://view.oneroomstreaming.com/index.php?data=MTY3OTQzMjc1MjI0MjE2MyZvbmVyb29tLWFKbWluJmNvcHlfbGluaw==>

Memorial contributions can be made to Journey Home in Bartlesville, the local SPCA, Pilots N Paws, veterinary funds for needy clients, your church, or your favorite charity.

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR 25. 2:00 PM (CT)

Stumpff Funeral Home Chapel
1600 SE Washington Blvd
Bartlesville, OK 74006
(918) 333-4300
<http://www.Stumpff.org>

Reception After Service

MAR 25. 3:00 PM (CT)

Stumpff Funeral Home Chapel
1600 SE Washington Blvd
Bartlesville, OK 74006
(918) 333-4300
<http://www.Stumpff.org>

Tribute Wall



“ *William "Bill" Edward Caswell*

October 23, 2023 at 04:40 AM



“ *William "Bill" Edward Caswell*

October 06, 2023 at 03:15 PM



“ *I met Bill and Rosi when I worked at Dollywood in the late 1980's where many of my lunch breaks included listening to their Old-Time Comedy Folk songs. My best friend, Lee Cox took banjo lessons from Bill while we were both working at Dollywood. Lee became an accomplished banjo player, also playing during many of his church services. Today, many of my family members and friends continue to listen and enjoy the songs from Bill and Rosi!*

Matt Murray - March 30, 2023 at 03:14 PM



“ *Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of William "Bill" Edward Caswell.*



March 27, 2023 at 05:29 PM



“ 4 files added to the album Flower Pictures



Stumpff Funeral Home & Crematory - March 27, 2023 at 12:29 PM

KC

“ Bill is responsible for my first, and only, ride on a motorcycle. Of many kind interactions I remember with him, this is always the one that springs to mind first.



Kelly Churchwright - March 25, 2023 at 03:02 PM

BH

“ I was living in L.A. during the Urban Cowboy craze (circa 1979), and was getting ready to go on stage at a gig in Pomona, CA. I heard this low voice in my ear say, "Say, I hear you're from Bartlesville, Oklahoma." I spun around and there was Bill Caswell. We became instant friends and both wound up moving to Nashville around the same time, hanging out at Jim Ed Norman's publishing company, and wrote some great songs together. When he and Rosi moved back to B'ville, they were so good to Momaroo. I will never forget their kindness! Bill recorded some killer tracks with Duane in our Nashville home studio. Salt-of-the-earth, the real deal, a great human being and dear friend, Bill will be greatly missed.



Becky Hobbs - March 25, 2023 at 10:56 AM

RC

I am so saddened to learn of Bill's passing. I only learned the news today when I googled him after seeing the songwriters' showcase from Austin City Limits on YouTube. I saw the show on ACL when it aired initially. While all the writers and songs were stellar, Bill's Sodbuster and Don't Tell Mama I'm A Guitar Picker stood out to me for the wit, storytelling and down home warmth of his delivery. Rest In Peace, Mr. Caswell. You touched lives!!

ron cypert - May 26, 2023 at 05:46 PM

RW

“ *Rebecca J Wiggins lit a candle in memory of William "Bill" Edward Caswell*



Rebecca J Wiggins - March 25, 2023 at 08:48 AM

RW

It was a pleasure and honor to have met Mr. Bill. To see him and Ms. Rosi together was something out of a fairy tale. The way they looked at each other, to hear him say "Darlin" to her was magical. He and Ms Rosi will forever be in our hearts. Love you my dear friend

Rebecca J Wiggins - March 25, 2023 at 08:52 AM

DE

“ *Dru Edwards lit a candle in memory of William "Bill" Edward Caswell*



Dru Edwards - March 18, 2023 at 03:32 PM

SB

“ *Steve Baker lit a candle in memory of William "Bill" Edward Caswell*



steve baker - March 01, 2023 at 06:10 PM

FH

“ *Frances Harrington lit a candle in memory of William "Bill" Edward Caswell*



Frances Harrington - February 24, 2023 at 07:26 PM

JS

“ *Jeanne Foreman Shepherd lit a candle in memory of William "Bill" Edward Caswell*



Jeanne Foreman Shepherd - February 20, 2023 at 09:11 PM

JH

“ *Rosi,
Your love story is beautiful to all who know you and Bill. My heart hurts for you.
You will remain in my thoughts and prayers.*



*Sincerely,
Janice Holland*



Janice Holland - February 20, 2023 at 04:28 PM