

Willard R. DeWitt

August 17, 1932 - September 25, 2018

Willard R. DeWitt, 86, of Bourbonnais passed away Tuesday morning, September 25, 2018, peacefully at home surrounded by his wife and 3 daughters.

Willard Ray DeWitt, son of Lecil Ray and Hannah (Schneider) DeWitt, was born August 17, 1932, in Oskaloosa, Iowa.

After graduating from Olivet Nazarene College, Willard began his career in education in 1958 at Manteno School District where he taught Junior High School Science. He was Principal of Bradley East School in the Bradley Elementary School District for 23 years until his retirement in 1991. Willard loved to tell the stories of his years as principal – stories of the funny things kids said and stories of touching moments and interactions with his students, parents, and teachers. He continued supporting education post- retirement by serving as a BBCHS Board Member, as an Advisor at the Kankakee Area Career Center, and as an adjunct professor and student teacher supervisor for Olivet Nazarene University. In addition to his passion for education, he was an active member at 1st Church of the Nazarene in Kankakee where he served on the church board for many years.

Willard will be remembered by his family for his tender tears and his belly laugh and for ending phone calls with each of his daughters by saying “I want you to know that Dad loves you”. He was most at peace at his lake house in

MI where he would make the world's best potato salad, keep a meticulous lawn, and enjoy slow boat rides after a great dinner.

He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Helen of Bourbonnais; his children: Delaine (Neal) Logston of Elmhurst, IL, Jaymie (Audrey) DeWitt of Washington, NJ, and Nicole (Brent) Gassman of Littleton, CO; three grandchildren: Drew, Kyle, and Mara Gassman, a sister, Lorna Wolford of Bradley, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Willard was preceded in death by his parents, four brothers: Cleo, Roger, Gale and his twin brother, Wilbur DeWitt; a nephew, Richard Wolford Jr., and three nieces: Suzanne DeWitt, Cindy DeWitt, and Tammy Hootman.

Visitation will be held 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Friday, September 28, 2018 at Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Bourbonnais.

There will also be a closed casket visitation from 9:00 a.m. until the 10:00 a.m. funeral service on Saturday, September 29, 2018 at First Church of the Nazarene in Kankakee.

Interment will be held at Kankakee Memorial Gardens Cemetery in Aroma Township.

Memorials may be made to Hospice of Kankakee Valley BBCHS Academic Foundation.

Cemetery Details

Kankakee Memorial Gardens

15 S. 3000 E. Rd.
Kankakee, IL 60901

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **28**. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Bourbonnais - Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes, Inc.
295 Main St., NW
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 932-1214
cgfuneral@gmail.com

Visitation

SEP **29**. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

First Church of the Nazarene
1000 N. Entrance Ave.
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 933-1000
<http://www.k1naz.org>

Funeral Service

SEP **29**. 10:00 AM (CT)

First Church of the Nazarene
1000 N. Entrance Ave.
Kankakee, IL 60901
(815) 933-1000
<http://www.k1naz.org>

Tribute Wall

NA

“ *Our prayers are with you and your family at this time. May you find comfort and joy in the memories of Willard and your time together.*

Nick/Shirley Africano - September 28, 2018 at 10:13 PM

SB

“ *Mr. DeWitt, was my Principal when I was in Grade school, want to send my prayers to his Family. Great Man, will be missed by Many*



Sharon Dayhoff Brown - September 28, 2018 at 03:55 PM

DB

“ *DEAR HELEN AND GIRLS; WILLARD WAS ONE OF A KIND ALWAYS LOVED HIS BELLY LAUGH WHILE SHARING STORIES; WE TALKED A LOT AND EACH EXPRESSED OUR OPINIONS AND WE WERE ALWAYS RIGHT 0)))) HELEN THANKS FOR SHARING WILL WITH US DENNY AND CINDY BOSSINGER*

Dennis Bossinger - September 28, 2018 at 02:52 PM

MA

“ *So sorry for your loss ! Your dad was truly a fine gentleman! So many great memories you shared !
The MANCUSO'S. Fred,Linda & Eric*

Mancuso's - September 28, 2018 at 01:20 PM

JC

“ *Jim And Peggy Cole lit a candle in memory of Willard R. DeWitt*



Jim and Peggy Cole - September 28, 2018 at 01:16 PM

JP

*We are so sorry for your loss Jaymie and Audrey. Much Love to you both and your family.
Jim and Peg*

Jim and Peggy - September 28, 2018 at 02:19 PM

LK

“ *Helen & family.
Cora's fan club is sorry for your loss.
-Lori & Eric Kidd*

Lori Kidd - September 28, 2018 at 12:19 PM

JP

“ *Dear Helen , my heart goes out to you and yours at this difficult time , we speak your names in prayer frequently ! When I think about your Willard I remember that he was a gentleman through and through , and that he had one of the brightest , most beautiful smiles ever! Wayne says that when they talked, Willard always made him feel very special! We always admired his love for his family, that will live on forever, so inspiring !! Our love to you and yours ❤️🙏*

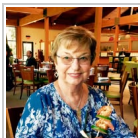
judy parker - September 27, 2018 at 10:47 PM



“ 88 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes - September 27, 2018 at 10:37 AM



“ So sorry to hear of Willie's passing. My thoughts and prayers for Helen and the girls.
Mary Kuller

Mary Kuller - September 27, 2018 at 09:34 AM

MH

“ A favorite memory lives on forever. Once upon a time, in the 1970's, the troupe of women from the Junior Service League of Kankakee, called *The Golliwoppers*, which was the title of the play they presented, came to Bradley East School for two performances, in the morning and afternoon. This was a play containing tall tales, and included one about Johnny Appleseed who crossed the country planting apple seeds to grow into trees.

Mr. DeWitt was so impressed with the excitement they brought to his school that day, that he left the school at noon and returned with a large box of the largest, shiny red apples ever seen! He passed them out to the cast as they ate their sack lunches between performances with generous compliments to all of the cast members. These actresses were volunteer moms who lived on nothing short of applause. His gift was a seed planted in the hearts that day, that has grown and lingered with me all these years.

With sincere sympathy to Helen and her family. He was a kind and loving man.

Marsha Hill

Director of the show

Marsha Hill - September 27, 2018 at 07:48 AM

KB

“ *Dee, I am so sorry to hear of your Dad's passing. I only met him a few times but he was always so accepting and caring. I remember going with your family to your vacation home in Michigan when we were in high school and your Dad being such fun out on the lake with us kids. I wish I could have known him better. Again, I am so sorry. I am holding you close in thought and prayer.*

Karen Maier Bobalik - September 26, 2018 at 03:09 PM

SS

“ Sorry for your loss helen! We will always have fond memories of willard! 2018 has been a tough year for all of us! Our God provides us comfort through these days! We love you and your family! Sid and barb!

Sid and barb shipman - September 26, 2018 at 10:43 AM

ES

“ Mr. DeWitt was my school principal. I recall him being a caring and friendly educator. My sincere condolences, thoughts and prayers to his family and friends.

Eric Sadler - September 26, 2018 at 09:44 AM



“ Mr Dewitt was my elementary principal, always remember him as a kind soul. Stern and caring in every encounter.

My thoughts & prayers for his family.

God bless, Mr D.

Ken Hicks - September 25, 2018 at 08:23 PM



MR

“ We are so sorry to hear of Mr Dewitt's passing. He was first a teacher to rick and I, then a boss to me, a customer to rick, but most of all a great friend! We will miss you! Hugs to Helen and his family!

Marla and Rick - September 25, 2018 at 05:22 PM

