



## William O'Connor

November 20, 1914 - August 17, 2010

Visitation for William J. "Bill" O'Connor, 95, a lifelong Kankakee area resident, will be from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday at the Clancy-Gernon-Hertz Funeral Home, west Kankakee. A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10 a.m. Friday at St. James the Apostle Catholic Church in Irwin. Father Doug Hauber will officiate. Burial will be in St. James the Apostle Catholic Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to St. James the Apostle Catholic Church. He died Tuesday (Aug. 17, 2010) at Provena St. Mary's Hospital. He was born Nov. 20, 1914, in Irwin, the son of William M. and Catherine Donovan O'Connor. A retired school teacher, he had 47 years credit in teaching in what is now Herscher Community District No. 2. He spent seven years teaching at the North Irwin School, District No. 127. He served in the U.S. Army, starting July 25, 1941, during World War II in the Central European Theater of Operations. During his time in service, many things happened. The Japanese dropped bombs on Pearl Harbor, which started World War II. In the invasion of Europe he hit the shores of France at Utah Beach on "D" plus 2 Day. While in service, he participated in the Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes and Central Europe Campaigns. That included the Battle of the Bulge, which he said he was still fighting. He missed five years of teaching. He returned after the war and taught at the Bertrand School. The schools were then consolidated into the Herscher Community District Unit 2. There he taught fourth, fifth and sixth grades at different times. He retired from teaching in June 1981. For a period of more than 41 years, he also worked at JC

Penney. There he worked in the stockroom, shoe department, men's department, and he also worked the floor. He took time off to earn his degrees and to travel. He was a graduate of St. Patrick High School and before he started teaching he attended St. Viator's College in Bourbonnais. After the war he attended Olivet College, where he received his bachelor's degree. He then received a master's degree in education from the University of Illinois. He was a member of the Irwin Lions Club and the Herscher American Legion. He had been the Irwin village treasurer. He said the world made more progress during his lifetime than the previous few thousand years, especially in the fields of communication, agriculture, medicine and transportation. Surviving are two brothers, Alex O'Connor of Irwin, Gerald "Jiggs" O'Connor of Bradley; numerous nieces and nephews and great-nieces and great-nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents; four brothers, Bernard, James, Frank and Paul "Babe;" and one sister, Mary Margaret Ducat.

# Tribute Wall



“ 1 file added to the album *Tribute Album*



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**Clancy-Gernon Funeral Homes** - December 07, 2010 at 03:47 PM



“ *"Uncle Bill" was a very good man and will be missed by all of us who knew him. May the Lord be with all his family and friends at this most difficult time, my deepest sympathies to all his family and friends.##imported-begin##Michael Niesen##imported-end##*

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August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ *Bill was a very good friend of mine. I will miss him very much. He possessed a ton of memories which he shared with me. He will begin sharing those great memories with everyone in Heaven.##imported-begin##Ted Tusinski##imported-end##*

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August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ *Prayers are with you.##imported-begin##Craig and Teresa Culver##imported-end##*

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August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ Mr. O'Connor was both mine and my 2 sisters and brother's 4th grade teacher at Herscher Grade School more years ago than I care to remember.  $i\frac{1}{2}$ He was a terrific teacher that I remember very well.##imported-begin##Barbara (Akers) Miller##imported-end##

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August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ I have very fond memories of Bill. He was my grade school teacher and at that time it wasn't too long after WW II and he used to talk to us about his experiences. I also worked with him at St. James' CCD program. And I probably bought at least one pair of shoes from him. He was a great man. The family has my deepest sympathy at this difficult time.##imported-begin##Joseph Fritz##imported-end##

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August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ <br><br>Sorry for the loss of a good man.##imported-begin##Ron Ramsey##imported-end##

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August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ I met Bill at Penny's when I was a teen,<br><br>during my conversation with Bill we discovered we may be shirt tail relatives. <br><br>Bill also helped me get my very first charge plate at Penny's<br><br>Bill was a really great guy, sadly missed by all his family and friends I am sure.##imported-begin##Robert Berns##imported-end##

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August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ ALWAYS a cheerfull greeting, a kind word, and a pleasant smile, Bill's shoes could never be filled! My deepest sympathy to all of you! I have many pleasant memories of my loving and caring friend. I am certain God met him and said "Well done, My good and faithful servant!" God Bless!   
###imported-begin###JoAnn Bertrand Bosman###imported-end###

August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ Memories of Bill would easily fill a large volumn book with the first chapter highlighted by a small 4th grade classroom on the south side of Herscher. Teaching young impressionable children was Bill's forte. A natural in every respect. Nothing changed as the years went by. He knew every student by name and was there to assist, whenever needed, even as each went their separate way in life. Bill introduced me to the NFL one snowy winter day at Wrigley Field. He taught me the art of selling shoes at JCP, took pictures at my wedding and stayed in touch during my active military years while comparing military service between the Army and the Navy. A full life well lived is a legacy all should strive for. His work has just begun in an eternal setting. He will be missed by many.   
###imported-begin###Patrick Hauert###imported-end###

August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ Jerry,   
  
  
  
My deepest sympathy. I met you and Bill at Heritage Village. I could tell by knowing Bill briefly that he was a wonderful person. Such a warm smile. I am sure that he will be greatly missed. I'm sure you have a lot of wonderful memories.   
###imported-begin###Judy Andersen###imported-end###

August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ Bill was a long time good friend and will be greatly missed. ï¿½Our deepest sympathy to his family.##imported-begin##Charlie & Mary Denault##imported-end##

August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ Bill was a true gentleman, very thoughtful and kind. He will be missed much. God Bless You Bill.##imported-begin##Susan Evans-O'Hearn##imported-end##

August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ My deepest sympathy. ï¿½I remember Bill as a kind and gentle man, obviously intelligent, and someone who always knew us, regardless of the long time between meetings. ï¿½God bless him.##imported-begin##James R. Weinlader##imported-end##

August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM



“ From both my initial exposure to Bill as my grade school teacher to making sure to say hi when shopping at Penney's, Bill was always the same friendly good hearted person. Always remember the "at ease" when class got a little noisy. ï¿½And Bill braving to take me along with a small group of just out of (or about to be) high school kids to the 1964 Worlds Fair in New York City, by train, no less. ï¿½Really big city for us young country boys. Always a warm greeting as we occasionally met over the last 45 some years. Great times/great memories/great man.##imported-begin##George B Rivard##imported-end##

August 17, 2010 at 11:21 AM