

## **William B. Clayton Jr.**

July 4, 1921 – December 12, 2005  
(State Deputy 1978 – 1980)



Bill was born on the Fourth of July 1921 in Baltimore. As the story goes he arrived in this world, just as a marching band was passing by the house and his family believes he loved a good party and music from that day forward.

Bill was a man of service. He loved his country and served in WWII as a Sergeant in the U S Air force in the Pacific theater of operations. For thirty years after his return from the military, he served his community in the Baltimore City Police Department. He worked his way up from foot patrol, to traffic, safety education, meter maids, taxi bureau, and was promoted to Sergeant. (Just in case you were wondering, in his family a Sergeant outranked everyone else.) He continued in his career growth working in motor control, evidence control, and then getting promoted to Detective. Bill was modest about his work on the force. As an example, in the early 1950's, he was commended by Governor McKeldin for apprehending several robbers, a fact that was unknown until the family discovered the letter just a few days after his death. He continued in security work after retiring from the force, as a Fraud Investigator for Maryland National Bank for 9 years.

Bill also served God as a member of the Parish Council at the Shrine of the Little Flower parish and was very proud that before the Disabled American Act, he convinced the pastor to erect a wheelchair ramp in the front of church. He also served on the board of his townhouse community while he lived in Bel Air and on the Grounds Committee of his condominium community.

Bill also loved his religion. Thus, the two most important things that governed his life were the Knights of Columbus and his family.

During his membership in the Knight's of Columbus of some 50 years he was a dedicated and fraternal brother. Because of this dedication in his council and his involvement in the teachings of our order, Bill became a leader in the affairs of Notre Dame Council. His belief that the Knights of Columbus should become more involved in our communities became paramount in his thinking.

Because of the leadership and devotion to his council he was elected to the office of Warden and finally to the ultimate office of Grand Knight of Notre Dame Council. While he became engaged in the many affairs of his council one of the most important things formed was the formation of the Singing Knights and he was its first musical director. Under his guidance a board of directors was established to handle all requests for their appearances. To this day the Singing Knights are known throughout the State of Maryland bringing joy and happiness to the aged and infirmed now for a period of over 40years.

His involvement did not end with his council. His leadership in his council was quickly noticed by the Maryland State Council. Bill was unanimously elected to State office, serving as State Warden, State Treasurer, State Secretary, and finally as State Deputy. As State Deputy Bill immediately made Charity his clarion call and pursued it to the fullest in his two years of service. He also served on State Scholarship Program for 20 years.

But first and foremost, Bill was a family man. The greatest joys of his life were his marriage to Ruth and the four children she gave him, Terry, Betty Ann, Marylou and Eileen. He was a devoted husband and father who loved his children dearly raising them in the Catholic faith with great success. Tragedy came in

to Bill's life when he lost his wife Ruth and his youngest daughter Eileen to a devastating disease at an early age - a shock that was hard for him to accept. Even with these tragedies, Bill never lost faith and believed it was God's will.

As happens with tragedy, a turn of happiness can ease the suffering and the anguish. Bill met and married Dolores and they enjoyed a full life together of over 16 years of marriage full of Knights of Columbus adventures, traveling, and golfing. But in their later years, Bill was diagnosed with a debilitating and terminal illness. Despite her own medical challenges, Dolores was there for him, giving him strength until the end, through her determination and loving care.

Bill was always ready to hear a good joke and usually had a few of his own to share. His sense of humor never left him even in his final days. Just before his death, during a snowstorm, Dolores opened the curtains so Bill could see the snow while he lay in bed and remarked to him that it sure was cold outside. Bill's response "it's not a problem for me, I'm not going anywhere!"

A man of many talents, Bill wrote the song "Look Up to a Star" which was played by the organist during his funeral mass. He also wrote a short collection of untitled poems, some of them spiritual, a few romantic, but one that perhaps sums up his zeal for life:

*Time is of the essence, wise men are heard to say.  
Time is of the essence, just so much in every day.  
Use it then wisely, waste not a minute.  
Use it then wisely, put everything in it.*