



# William F. Beyer

## Life Story

All who knew William Beyer would agree that life was certainly more interesting when he was around. Successful in his career, Bill was a devoted family man whose focus was not on building material wealth but on living life to the fullest each day. A longtime resident of the community he loved, he leaves behind a lasting imprint in the sands of time. Life will never be the same without Bill here, but his legacy will be proudly carried on by the numerous children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren who follow in his footsteps.

Amidst the vibrant decade of the Roaring Twenties was the year 1923 that was filled with numerous noteworthy events. Calvin Coolidge was sworn in as President of the United States after the death of Warren G. Harding while insulin was first used as a treatment for diabetes. The first baseball game was played in Yankee Stadium during a time when Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb commanded baseball fields from coast to coast. This same year was greeted with great anticipation as a young German immigrant couple living Paw Paw, Michigan, learned that they would be blessed with the birth of a new baby. Their wait was over on August 9th when their healthy baby boy drew his first breath. William F. was one of nine children born to his parents, Hugo and Minna (Ashmaneit) Beyer, and was raised on the family farm in Alma Township alongside his sisters, Gertrude, Dora, Elsie, Martha, and Marie, and his brothers, Gus, Horst "Fritz," and Francis "Bud."

In many ways William, or Bill as he was often known, experienced an upbringing that was typical for the youth of his generation. He was a student at the Acorn Country School for eight years and then went on to Paw Paw High School beginning in 1936. After graduating from high school in 1940, Bill went on to Western Michigan College.

During the late thirties tensions were escalating overseas in what would become WWII, and although America had hopes of remaining neutral we were left with no choice but to engage in the fight after the vicious attack on our naval base in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Like countless other young men and women, Bill answered the call to serve during this time, setting his schooling aside in the process. He served as a laboratory technician in the medical department of the United States Army. Throughout his time in the service Bill served as part of the Asiatic Pacific Theater in New Guinea, the Philippines, and Japan. In recognition of his service Bill was awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation, American Theatre Service Medal, Asiatic Pacific Theatre Service Metal, and the Philippine Liberation Medal. Bill was also a lifetime member of the Portage VFW Post 5855 where he enjoyed the friendship of his comrades.

With his military duty fulfilled, Bill returned to Michigan where he resumed his education, eventually receiving his BS in 1948. He worked as a lab technician at the Paw Paw Kellogg Clinical Laboratory and also at Borgess Hospital during the late forties and early fifties. Bill also began working as an endocrinologist at the Upjohn Company in 1948 where he remained for the rest of his career. He retired

as a research scientist in 1993 after 45 years of dedicated work. Bill was successful in his chosen career, receiving the W.E. Upjohn Award in 1973. Bill also wrote or co-wrote numerous trade articles for various publications. He had memberships in the American Pharmaceutical Association (APhA), American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS), New York Academy of Science (NYAS), American Institute of Chemistry (AIC) and once was a fellow at the AAPS and AIC as well.

Working at Borgess Hospital was a young nursing student who stole his heart. Her name was Mary Ann Keller, and after dating for a time the couple found themselves deeply in love. With a desire to establish a life together Bill and Mary Ann were married in 1948. Together they welcomed 11 children into their hearts and home: Lauren, Gretchen, Mark, Michael, Matt, Mary Lou, William "Mickey," Marty, Molly, Patrick, and Shannon.

Bill was an active part of his community throughout his life. Bill worked with the Cub and Boy Scouts at St. Monica Catholic Church for about 25 years where he served as Cub Master for a time and also as the chairman of the Cub and Boy Scout committees. In appreciation of his selfless service he received the Order of the Arrow badge and the St. George Award.

It was easy to see that Bill was a lover of life. He greatly enjoyed camping with his family and friends in a travel trailer throughout Michigan. Bill also camped in other states and in Canada as a member of the National Campers & Hikers Association (NCHA). At home Bill also liked gardening and had a veggie stand by the road in Portage that was frequented by his loyal customers and friends year after year. Beginning in 1990, Bill began traveling with his daughter Gretchen and her husband Len to international Bible Student conventions. He travelled to eight international conventions and several held in Grand Rapids and Jackson, Michigan. He also helped some young Polish Bible Students attend college.

In his sunset years, Bill suffered from age-related dementia and lived with his daughter Molly and her children in his home in Portage. He continued to enjoy his corn cob bird/squirrel feeders and giving his daughter gardening and mowing advice.

Although he seemed to described himself as someone who was all about himself, the love that William Beyer had for others was easy to see. He was a dedicated husband and father who also gave back to those around him. Bill was funny, even if only in his own mind, as his jokes and antics were known to be met with an eye roll or two, but he was almost always successful in getting some sort of smile or giggle. He ended every conversation with "love ya". He leaves a priceless collection of memories behind that will be forever treasured.

William F. Beyer of Portage died at his home on January 13, 2013. Bill's family includes his children & spouses: Lauren Beyer, Gretchen (Len) Griehs, Mark (Lori) Beyer, Matt (Lori) Beyer, Mary Lou Beyer, William "Mickey" Beyer, Marty Beyer, Molly Kuivenhoven, Pat (Kristen) Beyer, and Shannon (Mike) Carpenter; sisters, Martha Dill and Marie Smith as well as 18 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren, and numerous other relatives. Bill was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Ann Beyer, in 1977; son, Michael Beyer; sisters, Gertrude Moore, Dora Magnan, and Elsie Fish; and brothers, Gus Beyer, Horst "Fritz" Beyer, and Francis "Bud" Beyer. Visit with his family on Monday, January 21st from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon at Life Story Funeral Home, Portage; 5975 Lovers Lane (344-5600) where a funeral will immediately follow Monday at 12:00 noon. Please visit Bill's memory page at [www.lifestorynet.com](http://www.lifestorynet.com) where you can archive a memory or photo and sign his memory book online before coming to the funeral home. Memorial donations may be made to Senior Services.