



## William M. "Bill" Francis

April 16, 1926 - December 6, 2018

William M. "Bill" Francis, 92, passed away Thursday at Napa Nursing Center, Napa, CA.

Bill was born April 16, 1926 in his maternal grandparents, Manuel and Rosa Ribeiro's, home on East G St. in Benicia. His parents, Manuel and Mary Francis were both born in Portugal. His mother migrated from Pico, Azores Islands to the United States at age 2. His father emigrated from the mainland at age 19.

Bill graduated from Alhambra Union High School in Martinez in 1943, and shortly after graduation, joined the U.S. Navy and became a Signalman. He served in the Pacific during WWII on two ships including the U.S.S. Noble. At the end of the war, Bill was honorably discharged and enrolled in college under the G.I. Bill. He attended Vallejo Junior College for 2 years and then transferred to San Jose State University where he received his Bachelor's Degree in Journalism. He was very proud to be a member of "The Greatest Generation."

Upon graduation from college, Bill returned to Benicia where he served as a staff member of the Benicia Herald, co-agent with Prudential Insurance and the first full time manager of the Benicia Chamber of Commerce. Bill greatly enjoyed his chamber work and eventually became the executive director of

the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce. Years later, Bill became the Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Terra California Company, the main developer of Rossmoor in Walnut Creek and then founded his own commercial development company, Civic Development, a commercial real estate firm.

Bill met Nina Lou Smith when she was a dental assistant across the street from the Benicia Herald where he worked. They were married on June 14, 1953 at a Catholic Church in Las Vegas, NV where close friends and family were in attendance for the weekend long celebration. They were married for 58 years until she preceded him in death on August 24, 2011.

Bill was dedicated to serving his community and was a lifetime member of the Lions Club in Walnut Creek and the Martinez Historical Society. He was especially proud to have completed a project at the Historical Society's Museum assembling a book of photographs and information of residents of Martinez who served in the Armed Forces during WWII.

Survivors include his sister, Beverly Acevedo of Benicia; brother, Richard Francis of Martinez; niece, Laura Acevedo Bennett and her husband, Arnuefo Tapia of Petaluma; his nephew, Bill of Oregon; sisters-in-law, Kathy Smith of Vallejo and Bobbie Lynn Nickolatos of Benicia; and numerous other nieces, nephews, cousins and friends he so loved and remained close to his entire life.

Visitation will be held 4-8 PM with Vigil Services at 7 PM on Sunday, Dec. 16 at Passalacqua Funeral Chapel, 901 West 2nd St., Benicia. Mass of Christian Burial will be held 11 AM Monday, Dec. 17 at St. Dominic's Church, 450 East I St., Benicia. Burial with military honors will follow at St. Dominic's Cemetery, Benicia.

Memorial contributions are preferred to the Lions Center for the Visually Impaired, 175 Alvarado St., Pittsburgh, CA 94565, the Martinez Historical Society, PO Box 14, Martinez, CA 94553 or any Veteran's memorial organizations.

# Previous Events

## Vigil services

DEC 16. 7:00 PM (PT)

Passalacqua Funeral Chapel  
901 W Second Street  
Benicia, CA 94510  
(707) 745-3130  
info@passalacquafuneralchapel.com  
<https://www.passalacquafuneralchapel.com>

## Mass of Christian Burial

DEC 17. 11:00 AM (PT)

St. Dominics  
475 East I Street  
Benicia, CA

# Tribute Wall



“ *William M. "Bill" Francis*

November 29, 2022 at 08:20 PM



“ *I am sorry to learn of Mr. Francis passing. He was my long time customer in Benicia's Supermarket. He'll always come by with a gentle smile, and has never given me any issues. At times, he'll make a borderline flirty eye, haha! Over all, he's a sweetheart of a man. I will always remember Mr. Francis, because he was a Gem. Condolences to his family.*



**Betty** - January 29, 2019 at 10:52 AM



*Aww this is very sweet. He was my great uncle. Thank you Betty and his flirty eye was known far and wide*

**Stephanie Wasson** - August 22, 2024 at 07:28 PM



“ *Betty lit a candle in memory of William M. "Bill" Francis*



**Betty** - January 29, 2019 at 10:48 AM

BR

“ I will miss Bill so much . He was such a fantastic man. I enjoyed my visits, and his memories of the family. He always brought smiles to my face. He was such a happy man. He talked of how much he loved his family . He talked of how special it was to have his sister Beverly, and Laura his niece. He told me he felt like a dad to Laura and how special that was to him . Laura and Beverly were there next to him through everything, and he said he was so blessed to have them . He also spoke so highly Arnuefo, Greg and Michelle, Mike and Luly, brother Richard, and so many other family members . He felt so loved. and I know he was at peace when he left this world to be with Nina again ❤️

Brenda Ribeiro - December 14, 2018 at 06:49 PM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of William M. "Bill" Francis.



December 14, 2018 at 01:57 AM

CD

“ Always happy what a sweet gentleman. I enjoyed getting to know Bill over the last few months. Such a nice kind spirit. So sorry for the familys loss. I enjoyed his company and smile.

Charlene Dinsdale - December 10, 2018 at 10:00 PM

TM

“ Dear Beverly & Laura,  
God received another beautiful soul through his gates in Heaven. Bill was our Patriarch and I will miss our many conversations we shared over the years. May you find comfort knowing he is with his beloved Nina. He missed her terribly these past 7 years. Bill entertained all of us with "antics" he shared of our parents, uncles and aunts when they were young. We were bless with his fantastic memory and family history. I will miss his huge smile and hugs and memories of this beautiful man. Rest in Peace Cousin Bill.



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**Trudy & Jim McAnally** - December 10, 2018 at 07:24 PM

ME

“ Where have the years gone? Remembering Bill and Nina and all those memories we shared here, there and everywhere! Such a long struggle near the end, so I am happy he is with his many loved ones now and at peace. To his family and his many friends, my sympathy at your loss. Benicia and Martinez have lost their true cheerleader!  
Marie Earp

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**MARIE EARP** - December 08, 2018 at 11:12 PM

LA

“ I knew him as Uncle Bill. My dearest friend Laura was his niece and she introduced him as Uncle Bill thus he was Uncle bill. Loving, caring witty and loved his church. Lived a long great life and I know he is so happy to see the love of his life Nina Lou!! Will miss you!  
Leslie Abbott

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**Leslie Abbott** - December 08, 2018 at 10:11 PM

LT

“ *Lori Thompson lit a candle in memory of William M. "Bill" Francis*



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**Lori Thompson** - December 07, 2018 at 03:04 PM

BF

“ *Bob White and Family purchased the Finest Fare well Spray for the family of William M. "Bill" Francis.*



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**Bob White and Family** - December 07, 2018 at 11:59 AM