



William Van Smith

May 18, 1936 - November 21, 2025

William Van Smith, known to all as Bill, passed away peacefully on November 21, 2025, in Asheville, North Carolina. He was surrounded by his family after a beautiful day spent together sharing stories, dancing, laughing, and loving. It was a farewell filled with the same warmth, humility, and joy he brought into the world every day.

Born on May 18, 1936, in Wheatley, Kentucky, Bill was the beloved son of William VanPelt Smith and Hattie Williams Smith. The youngest of three children, he was cherished by his older sisters, Doris and Carolyn.

Bill spent his early childhood in Kentucky before his family moved to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, when he was six years old. He attended Wiley School and later graduated from R.J. Reynolds High School in 1954.

A proud Tar Heel, Bill graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1959, where he was a devoted member of the Alpha Kappa Psi fraternity and formed many lifelong friendships.

After college, Bill served his country as a Private in the U.S. Army in 1959. He was called back into service during the Berlin Crisis in the fall of 1961 and was stationed at Fort Meade, Maryland.

In 1960, Bill met his best friend and the love of his life, Elizabeth (Betsy) Blythe Holland, on a blind date in Charlotte. They married in 1961 and built a beautiful life together, one marked by partnership, devotion, and deep family love.

Bill's work ethic was evident from an early age. As a boy, he delivered the Winston-Salem Sentinel twice a day. After his military service, he worked for Pilot Freight Carriers for five years in Winston-Salem, Charlotte and Durham. In 1963, Bill began his 16-year career at First Union National Bank, where he also continued his education at the Rutgers School of Banking. The following year, he and Betsy permanently relocated to Asheville, where they built a family, a community, and a shared passion for the mountains of Western North Carolina.

In 1979, Bill embarked on a new business venture with Jim Hughes when they purchased Carolina Tire and Retreading Co., which later became TireTek and eventually sold their main operation to Tire Kingdom. He spent 22 successful years in the tire industry before retiring. He and Jim remained business partners until his passing. Retirement didn't last long. In 2001, Bill and his son, Brian, opened Heavenly Ham in Charlotte, a venture he approached with his signature enthusiasm, integrity, and care.

Bill was deeply committed to the Asheville community throughout his life. Being the humble man he was, he never sought recognition, but his family shares his service as a testament to the man he was. His involvement included: President of the Asheville Merchants Association; Kiwanis Club; member of the Board of Trustees at Mars Hill College and Chairman of its Public Relations Committee; Treasurer of the United Fund; Board member of Quality '76; Chairman of the Budget Planning Committee at First Baptist Church; and Board member of Three Mountaineers, Inc. He also served on the Business Administration Advisory Committee of Asheville-Buncombe

Technical Institute, as well as the Board of the Daniel Boone Council, Boy Scouts of America.

Above all, Bill's greatest joy and lifelong passion was his family. Affectionately known as Popi, family came first, always, and he poured his heart into every moment with them. Bill created countless memories filled with love and laughter, often fueled by his keen sense of humor: arriving at his grandchildren's door each Halloween in a homemade costume, showing up with Sprite, chocolate chip cookies, and a package of stickers during his babysitting days, or letting him "push me higher" on the swing set. He and Betsy also traveled the world together, collecting treasured memories throughout their 64 years of marriage. Yet some of his happiest moments were at the beach—building sandcastles, getting buried in the sand, taking long walks, watching sunsets, and sharing "pushuppies" in Calabash. His kindness, humility, and steadfast love will be forever remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Bill is preceded in death by his parents and his sisters, Doris S. Conrad and Carolyn S. Whicker. He is survived by his beloved wife, Betsy of Asheville; his sons, Van (Mary Bryan) Smith of Charlotte and Brian Smith of Miramar Beach, Florida; and his treasured grandchildren, Elizabeth Anne Smith and William Smith. Bill also leaves behind a large family of nieces and nephews whom he loved dearly.

A special thank you to the care provided by Asheville Home Health, Mission Hospital Pulmonology Unit and Palliative Care, Paula Kelley and NCGCM, and our friends at Harmony at Reynolds Mountain.

A private burial service will take place at Riverside Cemetery. A memorial service will be held at Morris Funeral Home on Friday, December 5, 2025 at

1pm, with a reception to follow at the Country Club of Asheville.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to The Salvation Army, Samaritan's Purse or Carolina Breast Friends.

Cemetery Details

Riverside Cemetery

53 Birch Street
Asheville, NC 28801

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC 5. 1:00 PM (ET)

Morris Funeral & Cremation Care Chapel
304 Merrimon Avenue
Asheville, NC 28801

Reception to Follow at The Country Club of Asheville

Tribute Wall

FS

“ From SAI (sushi) for william van smith purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of William Van Smith.



From SAI (sushi) for william van smith - December 05, 2025 at 07:49 AM

FS

“ From SAI (sushi) for william van smith planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William Van Smith.

From SAI (sushi) for william van smith - December 05, 2025 at 07:49 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of William Van Smith.



December 04, 2025 at 08:09 PM

LF

“ Love, Millicent and family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William Van Smith.

Love, Millicent and family - December 04, 2025 at 08:09 PM

CH

“ Sorry for your loss Mrs Smith, Brian and Van. I still remember the day Brian and I were throwing rocks at a bees nest just behind the 13th hole at the county club of Asheville. I don't remember getting stung myself, but remember Brian got stung pretty bad and when we got back home Mr smith made some mud and put it on all the stings. Hope to see you guys again one day! Chris young

Chris - November 30, 2025 at 12:23 AM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of William Van Smith.



November 30, 2025 at 12:01 AM

CY

“ Chris and Dianne young planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William Van Smith.

Chris and Dianne young - November 30, 2025 at 12:01 AM

PY

“ Peggy Young purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of William Van Smith.



Peggy Young - November 29, 2025 at 09:59 AM

PY

“ Peggy Young planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William Van Smith.

Peggy Young - November 29, 2025 at 09:59 AM



“ Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of William Van Smith.



November 27, 2025 at 11:42 PM



“ Serene Retreat was purchased for the family of William Van Smith.



November 26, 2025 at 10:11 AM