



## William Howard Gardiner

June 25, 1934 - November 20, 2014

### Obituary of William Gardiner

William H. Gardiner passed from this earth the morning of November 20, 2014. "Bill" was born June 25th, 1934 in Morenci, Michigan a small town a stone's throw from the Ohio state line. Morenci played an important role in shaping Bill's life, growing up he was the big brother to two sisters; Mary Ann (Lamb) and Jillyne (Belding), and little brother Doug. Bill graduated from Morenci High School in 1952, at the time the Bulldogs boasted the longest football winning streak in the state of Michigan at 44 games, being declared State Champions in 1949 where they held their opponents scoreless and tallied 514 points. He had an uncanny ability to recall moments, scores and his role in most of those games.

Upon completion of high school, and a brief semester at Adrian College, Bill joined the United States Marine Corps, where he served during the end of the Korean conflict two years in southern California. He joined the Marines with his future brother-in-law Raymond Lamb, a decision both were proud to proclaim. After an honorable discharge Bill returned to Morenci to begin his civilian life; not long after he met Alice L. Bailey from Hudson, Michigan. They were married July 25th 1957, the next year they welcomed their first child Jeffrey W. Gardiner, almost three years later a daughter Cynthia L. Gardiner. By this time Bill had completed a degree from Adrian College and was writing

for the Adrian Dailey Telegram as a sports reporter. A few years later he also wrote a weekly outdoor column.

That "Outdoor Outlook" column led to a job in the spring of 1970 in Lansing, Michigan at Michigan United Conservation Clubs where he continued the outdoor outlook feature in MUCC's magazine Michigan Out of Doors. The impact Bill made on the look and content of the magazine was felt in the first month he was on board and continued for several years. The format and award-winning cover photography change brought new readers and increased circulation throughout the great state of Michigan. A love affair for all that Michigan offered ensued, great lakes salmon fishing topped the list and he rarely missed an opportunity to explore the different Lake Michigan ports. Bill shared his enthusiasm for Northern Michigan with his family, including them whenever possible: camping while reporting the latest DNR rule changes or new fishing techniques that he had to try for himself. Camping with the family meant beach combing which included hunting for Petoskey stones. A trip from the north almost always resulted in a pail or two of Michigan's state stone. Being a writer, an artistic creative side resided within and Bill knew there was something he could do with all those stones. Years later, Bill would describe how he first began to cut and polish the fossilized coral by saying he thought at the time he had invented lapidary. He had never met anyone who did it and didn't know there was a term for the craft or the proper tools that made it all easier.

It wasn't long before Bill was producing jewelry and crafts from his new hobby. Making a little money on the side, he began to search for others who held this same interest. He found and joined the mid-Michigan Gem and Mineral Society where dozens of "rockhounds" were eager to share their knowledge and love of lapidary. Family, friends and co-workers were amazed at the objects of art Bill created and lined up for a chance to wear or display his stone crafts. Before long Bill bought out a northern Michigan rock shop and re-

opened it in his basement as A&B Rock Shop, selling tools, equipment and supplies to other enthusiasts. Since the business was in their home the entire family pitched in to help, but it was Bill's private vision that propelled the business. Weekend arts and crafts or gem and mineral shows gave the new business exposure, increasing a time commitment that already exceeded full time hours. Looking for a more public location and to free him of a job working for others, A&B Jewels & Tools was born at 350 W. Grand River Ave. Williamston, Michigan. Alice and Bill Gardiner were now tied to a store and a 9 to 5 commitment.

The rock shop format would no longer work as a business entity; the new A&B needed to appeal to a wider market. Bill never wavered; he just expanded his talents by learning goldsmithing, casting precious metals and faceting gem stones. The first stone Bill ever faceted won a Midwest Faceters Guild award; a few lessons later he was teaching others to facet. By expanding his knowledge and contacts in the jewelry making and precious gem world Bill made many friends in the industry. Soon A&B was supplying several local jewelry stores with tools and supplies, and many sought Bill's advice on equipment and techniques. He still taught classes and did many gem shows a month throughout the year. The calendar was highlighted in February each year with the Tucson Gem and Mineral show; the world's largest show of its kind. Bill and Alice looked forward to the winter months where they would do shows in Texas and use Tucson as a replenish trip buying the latest and greatest in gems, jewelry and equipment. The Raytech Company, an international lapidary manufacturer, approached Bill to represent them in Tucson securing the most sought after spot in the show. Thus began a 15 year period of work that placed A&B on the map as a serious player in the global market of lapidary and jewelry tool dealers. Orders were being placed year round from companies throughout the world as well as requests for catalogs which Bill compiled completely on his own. Teaching himself on his

beloved "Mac" computer Bill made flyers and catalogs and was his own in-house advertising director. Bill had no secret to success; it was plain hard work and an inner determination to provide for his family. It may not have appeared to all that the love of family is what drove Bill Gardiner to success, but those who knew him, knew that he always placed them above himself at every turn.

People who love the Lord Jesus Christ describe other believers who excel in life as "having fruit on the vine." Bill rarely shared emotional struggles, or personal problems that may have plagued his daily life. He had a drive to achieve that few people were given to see before the finished product was on display. He would wrestle with problems until a solution came to him, there were rarely confidants or sounding boards to bounce ideas from. He at times could be thought of as the lone wolf, but he didn't seek out pity or have a poor me attitude when solutions were slow to come. He just kept working, relying on experience and giving his best. The fruit was reflected in a complete life, a family who loved him, and friends who cared and respected his honesty, integrity and love for where he had come.

In June of this year Bill celebrated his 80th birthday with a party at his home in Lady Lake Florida. To be sure his children could attend Bill & Alice purchased their plane tickets and sent out many invitations to family and friends. For those of us lucky to be there, laughter and food abounded as well as the love Bill and Alice had for everyone there. He shared his gratitude to all whether they came from back home in Michigan or from across the street. He told his old stories and we laughed as if we were hearing them for the first time. We delighted in a surprise reunion with his brother Doug, and wished along with him that the rest of the family could have come. At the time we all expressed a desire to do it again the very next year. But God in his infinite wisdom had other plans; the Lord must have truly needed someone with Bill's talents and called on him to further the cause in God's kingdom. Rest in Peace, we love

you.

Cremation will take place at Beyers Funeral Home in Lady Lake, Florida. And a celebration of life service will take place Friday December 19th 2014 at 11:00 am, again at Beyers Funeral Home 134 North Hwy 27/441 Lady Lake, FL. 32159 (352)753-4444.

In Lieu of flowers donations can be made in the name of William H. Gardiner to American Legion Post #347, Lady Lake, Florida.