



## William Ray Merritt

August 3, 1942 - September 26, 2024

William R. Merritt (Bill) passed peacefully on September 26, 2024, at the age of 82.

Once accused of still having 50 cents of the first dollar he ever made, everyone that knew Bill also knew he was frugal. He acquired this trait through years of having less, where every small acquisition was a feat not to be squandered. Through his frugality, business wit, unending drive, raw ambition, and just plain hard work, Bill became a very successful entrepreneur and businessman.

After leaving his home state of Maine, Bill decided to get warm and come to Florida. Here, he attended

Pensacola junior college and later graduated from Auburn University with a degree in chemical

engineering. He also met his first wife, Gloria and her father, Horace. Horace introduced Bill to beekeeping

and from there, he was hooked. After working as a chemical engineer for a few years, Bill decided that beekeeping was his future.

His bees provided many barrels of honey. And in turn, he cared for his bees with enthusiasm and

forethought. He became so successful and well respected that he became President of the Florida State

Beekeepers Association, then later served as President of the American Beekeeping Federation. He also served on the beekeepers' technical council for Florida. He forged many relationships with other beekeepers at home and abroad and frequently conducted business with them. He bought and sold honey as well as provide containers for other beekeepers to sell their honey. Later, Bill married his second wife, Margaret. For 29 years, she was his close confidant and friend. They took many trips together and very much enjoyed shopping for antiques or even a good bargain at garage sales. Recently when asked what he was going to do with all the stuff he had acquired over the years, he just laughed and said "Me? That's you kids' problem!"

Bill is survived by his wife of 29 years, Margaret; three children(spouses) Dina(Chris), Randy(Shannon) and Ron( Sonja); Three bonus children Regina(Roy) Parker, Robert Cox and Jinny and Richard Cox; grandchildren Denym Merritt and Genny Gunter; bonus grandchildren, Richard Cox, Freightlin Cox, Cameron Parker, Ashton Parker and Nichole Parker and two bonus great grandchildren. He is also survived by his sister, Kathy(Joel) Jensen, and twin brothers Gilbert(Sandy) and Gerald(Anita) Merritt along with numerous other family members.

He is predeceased by his father and mother, Ray and Doris Merritt, Brother Ellis Merritt and Sister Pauline Dunn Marsh.

So, it with a heavy heart that we say our final farewell to Bill. He will be missed by many.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. Skip and Trey Young, along with Paula and Kimberly are assisting the family with arrangements. 850-926-5919, [www.familyfhc.com](http://www.familyfhc.com)

# Tribute Wall

DG

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



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**Dina Gunter** - October 29, 2024 at 09:53 AM

DG

“ 5 files added to the album William "Bill" Merritt



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**Dina Gunter** - October 14, 2024 at 10:26 AM