



William John Smith Jr.

June 26, 1954 - July 11, 2014

William John Smith, Jr. was better known by his friends as 'Billy from Philly'. Billy's journey started June 26, 1954 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Born to William and Margaret Smith, Bill went on to be raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Bill called the Central Valley home for over 20 years and is survived by his wife Marcia Fowle, step-son Kevin Adler along with his wife and son of San Francisco, his brother, Michael B. Smith of Delaware, sister, Deborah L. Dangler of Virginia, brother, Daniel T. Smith of Virginia and sister, Cheryl A. Lentine of Pennsylvania and many aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Bill attended elementary school at Nativity B.V.M., where he made many lifelong friends. He graduated from Frankford High School (home of the Pioneer) in 1973, where he played his beloved baseball, made all-city league as a catcher and caught the eye of major league scouts including the Cleveland Indians as a draft pick.

He studied briefly at Temple University before joining the Navy and served 4 years.

Billy's next journey was to California when the Philadelphia Navy shipyard closed and he was transferred to the Alameda Shipyard. A year after his arrival in Alameda that shipyard closed down as well. Billy then found himself moving to Modesto and taking a job at Sears as a maintenance technician. It was while there that he met his wife. The two just celebrated their 19th wedding anniversary and through the years they traveled east several times to

visit family and so he could show off his old stomping grounds.

Knowing Billy loved sports , was a big Philadelphia Eagles fans and that he played baseball in high school, Marcia talked him into coaching a senior little league team. That team ended up winning the city championship in his first year of coaching. He then decided to move to the other side of the plate and became a little league baseball umpire, calling games for high schools, colleges and semi-pro travel ball. He also refereed football, basketball, volleyball and one-time shot at soccer. Billy did more than just calling balls and strikes he also coached the kids along the way, giving them tips and pointers to improve their game.

Billy was a member of the Northern California Officials Association, TPR Baseball and All World Baseball. In addition he was a member of the Denair Lions Club, where he ensured the coffee was always ready at the pancake breakfast and got a thrill out of chairing the fair's parking for several years. There was never a person who Billy met that he didn't greet with a big smile and a story to tell. He loved to talk and make people laugh. His outgoing personality was infectious.

Being a die-hard Eagles fan Billy hung up his team's flags for all to see and never gave up hope that one day the team would win the Super Bowl. He was a proud grandfather and was already laying the groundwork to see that his grandson would be an Eagles fan.

Even though Billy was far away from his beloved Philadelphia he always found a way to find cheesesteaks, Tastykakes, scrapple and soft pretzels to get a taste of his hometown.

Billy spent 10 years working at Covenant Village and most recently worked at West Steel and Plastic, both in Turlock.

A celebration of Bill's life will be held on Saturday, August 2 at 10am at the Denair High School baseball field right at home plate where Billy would have wanted it. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you make a donation to a local youth sports program or school athletic department, in memory of Bill.

Tribute Wall



“ *William John Smith Jr.*

January 28, 2023 at 09:01 AM



“ *william dear, I will miss hearing your sweet voice on the phone.
philly will not be the same without you. rest well my love.*

verginia cadwell - July 31, 2014 at 12:00 AM