



## William "Bill" P. Murtha

April 17, 1944 - February 24, 2025

William "Bill" P. Murtha, 80, of Jupiter, FL and Middletown, NJ, beloved husband, father, grandfather, father-in-law, brother, uncle, brother-in-law, and friend passed away peacefully in his sleep at Jupiter Medical Center on February 24, 2025, surrounded by his wife of 53 years and his children.

Bill was born in Staten Island, NY on April 17, 1944, the second oldest child of Margaret and James Murtha. He attended Sacred Heart School and grew up scrappy-the toughest kid in the neighborhood, always with a basketball in his hand. He was so obsessed with basketball, even at age six he would sneak out of the house and play at night on the Port Richmond basketball courts. Even though the police would bring him home to worried parents, always fearless, the tike was right back on the court the next night. Nothing could keep him away from the basketball court.

Bill went on to become a Staten Island basketball legend with the Murtha name still, to this day, carrying cache on Staten Island. He went to Saint Peter's High School where he played for beloved coach and mentor Jack McGinley, winning the prestigious Jaques Award in 1961- the highest accolade given to the Island's most outstanding basketball player. He was a 6-foot-4 shooting guard who became the Island's second-ever 1000-point scorer. He was known for always being the toughest player on the court – running through every practice wearing ankle weights. Even in his seventies, Bill would get stopped by people who remember seeing him play for St. Peter's, not only for the high points he consistently put on the board, but his absolute tenacious defense and come from behind victories. In basketball, and life, Bill never gave up.

Upon graduation, he accepted a scholarship to the powerhouse Loyola Chicago Ramblers, and while he was unable to play varsity, because of NCAA tournament rules that barred freshman from playing varsity intercollegiate sports, he led the Rambler's freshman team to an undefeated season as the leading scorer. He also traveled with the varsity team and was with the team when they won the first NCAA Final Four tournament over Cincinnati in 1963.

Bill transferred to George Washington University after that season as the school gave him the opportunity to play both varsity basketball and baseball, his second sports love. During his sophomore year at GW, according to the Staten Island Advance, the famous Boston Celtics coach Red Auerbach hailed Bill as one of the country's best sophomore basketball players.

Then, tragedy struck. While home for winter break, Bill was in a catastrophic car accident and spent the next nine months in the hospital. With pins in his legs, he could never play collegiate basketball again. For his previous accomplishments, Bill received many accolades, including being inducted to the Staten Island Sports Hall of Fame in 2014 and the New York Post named him to the all-time starting five team for the borough in 2015.

Never one to feel sorry for himself and always one who wanted to help the underdog, Bill dedicated himself to a career in Special Education. He achieved undergraduate and master's degrees in Special Education and Administration from Seton Hall University. His first and most profound teaching experience was when he was

part of  
the all-star team of counselors at Mount Loretto in Staten Island. The boys  
he  
counseled at this foster-care facility stayed in his heart the rest of his  
life. Upon  
retirement, one of his projects was joining others in lobbying for Angel  
Mendez, a  
former student at Mount Loretto and Vietnam War hero, to be awarded the  
Medal of  
Honor. He remembered and admired Mendez and his siblings from the days  
of Mount  
Loretto and it was a cause that weighed heavily on him into his 80s.

Bill continued to work for the New York City Board of Education as a Special  
Education  
teacher for fifteen years and then transitioned into a career in insurance until  
his  
retirement.

Bill was good at everything he did. When he had to give up basketball, he  
became a  
scratch golfer. He loved dogs, boating, traveling especially with his wife and  
Frank and  
Mary, bird watching, spending summer afternoons at the Heron pool with his  
wife Kathy  
and gardening. But, most of all he loved just having fun with his family and  
friends. Often the only person in the room who could comfort a crying baby,  
his sense  
of safety, patience and security made him a beloved uncle to all the kids in the  
family.

Bill was an old-school gentleman who made every person he met feel special and always gave them a good laugh. He would spend hours on the phone with his old friends, siblings and his kids talking about Staten Island glory days but also checking on how they were doing and to see if he could help with anything. He was a faithful Catholic who worshipped at St. Jude's in Tequesta and for forty years at Saint Catharine's in Holmdel, NJ.

However, his most joyous memories were spending summers in Montauk, NY with his beloved wife Kathy, children and grandchildren. It was truly Bill's happy place in his later years. Those times and memories are closest to his and his family's hearts.

Bill had a massive stroke nine years ago and always the consummate fighter, went on to live many more years full of life and humor defying medical odds. These "bonus" years brought the memories most special to Bill and his family. He lived his life with charm, grace, loyalty, kindness, dignity, grit and humor but also a "fire in his belly" until his last day.

He was a person whose greatest compliment he would give to another was "I would

want them in a foxhole with me” but, in actuality, he was the person who everyone

wanted in a foxhole with them. There will never be another like him.

The family’s beloved Bill will be profoundly missed by his wife of 53 years Kathy,

children Eugenia Mezzalingua (Dan), Suzanne McDevitt (Morgan), Emilia Murtha, and

William P. Murtha, Jr. (Ryan) and adoring grandchildren, who loved their Pop Pop,

Kathryn, Sloane, Julia, Daniel William, Sunny, Ruby, Michael, and Hudson; Brother James

and Sisters Colleen and Maureen, cousin Kathy Killen (Jim), Monica and Joe Conrad,

goddaughter Lydia Reyes (Andrew) who was constantly devoted to his nursing care,

countless nieces and nephews, great-nieces and nephews, many in-laws whom he

adored, and many friends of seven decades whom he loved like family.

Bill was predeceased by his parents Margaret and James, his brother Raymond and

numerous in-laws who were members of the Benedetto family.

The family would like to thank the doctors, nurses and staff at Jupiter Medical Center for

their loving care for their Beloved Bill.

Bill loved and believed in this country. He was the consummate patriot. In

lieu of

flowers, the family requests donations be made in his memory to America's VetDogs

which trains and provides service dogs to veterans and first responders who have

physical injuries or who are suffering from PTSD.

([https://www.vetdogs.org/AV/Contribution/AVD\\_DonateNow.aspx](https://www.vetdogs.org/AV/Contribution/AVD_DonateNow.aspx))

A Viewing and Visitation will be held at Taylor and Modeen Funeral Home, 250 Center

Street, Jupiter, FL, on Saturday March 1 st , from 10:00am-12:00pm. A

Funeral Mass will

follow at St. Jude Catholic Church in Tequesta, FL at 1:00pm, followed by

Burial at

Riverside Memorial Park in Tequesta, FL at 2:00pm.

# Cemetery Details

## Riverside Memorial Park

19351 SE County Line Road  
Jupiter, FL 33469

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAR 1. 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (ET)

Taylor & Modeen Funeral Home  
250 Center Street  
Jupiter, FL 33458  
(561) 744-2030  
<https://www.taylorandmodeenflorida.com>

## Funeral Mass

MAR 1. 1:00 PM (ET)

St. Jude Catholic Church  
204 N U.S. 1  
Tequesta, FL

## Burial

MAR 1. 2:00 PM (ET)

Riverside Memorial Park  
19351 SE County Line Road  
Jupiter, FL 33469



# Tribute Wall

KK

“ Will always remember being at the Girls Softball games with Bill and Kathy.

Will fondly remember Dinners with them at “Harry and the natives” Restaurant while vacationing in Florida.

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**Karyn Keppler** - February 28, 2025 at 01:33 PM

RH

*I just found the obit late this afternoon. I was talking to Bill a couple of days before he passed. I would like to say the obit was one of the best I ever read.....and it perfectly describes Bill.*

*I knew OF him before I got to know him,,,,,which was after my wife passed away... a month after the 9/11 world trade center disaster. Jim Kelley, Joe Avena and Bill Murtha invited me for a week of golf in Florida and visiting Jim Albus at the TPF in Sarasota. They lifted my spirits.....which I really needed. We had such a good time Kelley , Avena and myself made it an annual winter event for fifteen years. Bill joined us for rounds of golf and Jim Albus and his wife ,Brenda were the most wonderful, hospitable hosts..... ever.*

*Bill reviewed his life story just as described in the obit. We had many laughs over beers at the TPF clubhouse.....and it was Bill who spotted Terry Bradshaw at the club, one year, and induced Bradshaw to sit and have a few drinks with us. No doubt about it Bill was an " Old school gentleman who made every person he met feel special and gave them a good laugh ".....My prayers and condolences are for him and his family. I will make a donation in his memory to the " America's Vetdogs" organization as mentioned in the obit.....Ray Hagemann*

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**Ray Hagemann** - February 28, 2025 at 07:58 PM