



## William Claude Houck

October 30, 1925 - October 5, 2012

William C. "Bill" Houck of Corvallis left us on Oct. 5 after battling prostate cancer and Parkinson's disease in the latter years of his life. He was 86 years old.

Bill was born in Clymer, Pa., to William Claude Houck Sr. and Annie Marie Yarnal Houck. Brother Donald had arrived a year and a half before. Bill Sr. moved the family to Eastern Washington State when Billy was almost 5 years old, to save his sons from a life of work in the coal mines of Pennsylvania. They survived through the cold winters of the Depression by hard work, a large garden and an impoverished lifestyle. Bill and his brother remembered picking raspberries and being told not to eat any because they didn't get paid for the ones they ate.

The second winter was spent in a canvas-covered structure heated by a wood stove to protect against the bitter cold and snow. Bill recalled how in winter the town would gather each year to cut ice out of the river to fill everybody's icehouse so they all would have ice in the summer.

The family moved to the Seattle area for Bill's last year of high school; he graduated from West Seattle High. He joined the U.S. Army Air Force in 1944 and served in numerous army installations in the states until the war was over. He then went to Washington State College and graduated with a degree in chemistry in 1951.

After college he worked in the field of chemical engineering for nearly 30 years, including a stint at General Electric, where he was part of a secret

project to produce the tritium for the first hydrogen bomb. Starting in 1956, he worked at Bechtel Corporation in San Francisco, then, starting in 1966, for Neptune Microfloc in Corvallis. In his eight years as chief engineer there, he was instrumental in growing the company from \$0.3 million to \$18 million in revenue.

After Microfloc, he traveled out of state to work in a variety of jobs, but always looked forward to returning to his home near Corvallis.

Bill enjoyed doing whatever he could to please and support those around him. His wife Dorothy's family had large family gatherings, and Bill loved attending and hosting many of these over the years. After Dorothy passed away, he met and married Eva Daniels, and loved traveling the world with her while they were able.

As each of his children learned new skills and developed expertise in them, he always would take an interest in whatever they were involved in. Attending sports events of his children in the past, and, more recently, his grandchildren was a great pleasure to him.

Bill was a man of integrity, usually choosing to understate his point rather than lose his reputation for honesty. He was an optimist to a fault, would often take blame that wasn't his, and quickly overlooked the mistakes of others. He was a man who grew old gracefully, softening and becoming more forgiving with age.

He always was faithful in church attendance, most recently at Grace Bible Fellowship in Tangent. He didn't talk much about his faith, but it was obvious to all who knew him, so words rarely were necessary.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents; Dorothy, his wife of 46 years; son Mike Houck; and granddaughter Jessica Houck. He is survived by Eva Houck, his wife of nine years; brother Donald Houck; daughter-in-law Dorothy Houck; daughter Marsha Dugan; and sons and their wives Doug and Pauline, Scott and Debbie, and Russ and Debbie Houck. He had 11 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Services will take place at 10:30 a.m. Oct. 13 at Grace Bible Fellowship.