



William Robert Riel

October 7, 1933 - April 12, 2025

William Robert Riel, a loving husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather passed away on April 12, 2025, at the age of 91. He was surrounded by his loving family at the time of his passing.

Bill was born on October 7, 1933, in Minneapolis, Minnesota to his parents Raymond and Charlotte Riel. He was the youngest of four children. At the age of two Bill's mother and siblings moved to California. His mother later married Arlie Knight when Bill was five years old. He attended Longfellow Elementary, Emerson Jr High, and Bakersfield High School where he was very active in swimming and basketball. It was in high school where he met the love of his life Crillene Winters.

Bill and Crillene were married on June 15, 1952, and together they raised their five children

Bills father, Arlie, opened Knight's Watch Shop in 1948. Bill started work at Knight's in 1951. In 1973, Bill took on the family business after his father's sudden passing. Bill recognized the potential of the business and gradually expanded its offerings beyond watches to include jewelry and precious stones. His dedication led him to become a certified goldsmith. In 1978, the store was renamed Knight's Jewelers, reflecting its evolution. Alongside Crillene and their second oldest son, Brian, Bill successfully managed the business from 1973 until his retirement in 2021.

Throughout his life Bill was always very creative. From sketching and painting to ultimately making custom fishing lures in the garage with lead weights,

paint and glitter. How proud he was when he would pull in a large Ling cod off the Morro Bay coast while using his custom lures.

Bill loved to fish and camp. He started the "Riel Annual" camping trip in 1983. Each year in the fall, the family and a few close friends would trek to a far-off destination to be together, enjoy the outdoors and to see who took home the prized trophy for the biggest fish.

Bill also loved to play cards, cribbage and particularly pinochle, with their besties Mike and Netta Yaeck.

Bill is survived by his wife of 72 years Crillene, son David (Pam), son Brian (Carrie), daughter Christine (Robert), daughter Ann (Michael), son Michael (Luis).

Also surviving "Papa" are his grandchildren Jonathan (Jeannine), Benjamin (Nicole), Courtney (Devin), Elise, Christopher (Kelli), Cailan (Kelly), Nathan (Kennedy), Neiman (Gabbie), Jacob, Noah (Rafaela), Lauren (Pete), Maris, Dalton, Andrew, Kyralisa. His great grandchildren are Hazel, Violet, Kelly, Abbey, Stevie, Camila, and Brooks.

Bill is preceded in death by his mother and father Charlotte and Arlie Knight, his brother Lyle, and his sisters Marilyn and Marjorie.

Bill was a man of his word. He was committed to God and his family. He was always serving and inspiring others with his consistent work ethic and integrity. Bill was an active member of the Knights of Columbus #977.

Thank you to Bakersfield Community Healthcare and Around the Clock Care. Special thanks Adriana, Sophia, Alex, Dolores, Patty, Michelle and many others for caring for him with such kindness and compassion.

The Funeral will be held at 10:00 am, April 23, 2025, at Elizabeth Ann Seton Church (12300 Reina Road)

Graveside to follow mass at Green Lawn Southwest (2739 Panama Lane)

In lieu of flowers please donate to St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Charities.

Tah Dah!

Cemetery Details

Greenlawn Southwest

2739 Panama Ln
Bakersfield, CA 93313

Previous Events

Mass

APR 23. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (PT)

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church
12300 Reina Rd
Bakersfield, CA 93312
<http://www.setoncatholicchurch.org/>

Graveside

APR 23. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (PT)

Greenlawn Southwest
2739 Panama Ln
Bakersfield, CA 93313

Tribute Wall

KC

“ *Mr. Riel was always a supporter of West High students and especially athletes not only when they were his customers but also during our high school days. I was always so impressed because he knew us by name whether we were in the shop buying jewelry or at church and saw him. What a fabulous man of faith & grand father he was too ! He will be missed by all and what a legend the Riel family holds in his honor.*

Kim Clerou - April 22, 2025 at 10:06 PM

JF

“ *Our heart felt thoughts and prayers 🙏 to Bill, Crillene and ALL of the Riel families.
Love, ❤️
John, Cynthia and ALL the Fox families.*

John Fox - April 22, 2025 at 05:56 PM

JH

“ *I had the pleasure of cutting Bill's hair when he was no longer able to go to his barber. He was kind, generous and had a million dollar smile. He insisted giving me one of his precious clocks that I wall treasure always! My condolences, love and prayers for the Riel Family. 🙏🙏❤️*

Janie Harrison - April 22, 2025 at 04:37 PM



“ *Emerald Garden Basket was purchased for the family of William Robert Riel.*



April 22, 2025 at 01:10 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of William Robert Riel.

April 22, 2025 at 01:10 PM



“ *Jeffery Farmer purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of William Robert Riel.*



Jeffery Farmer - April 21, 2025 at 11:12 PM



“ *Jeffery Farmer planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William Robert Riel.*

Jeffery Farmer - April 21, 2025 at 11:12 PM

KR

“ I will miss my Papa so much! He was such a loving and caring person and I feel so blessed to have had him in my life. I will never forget the fun times I had at Shaver Lake with him and also when he got me my very first fishing pole for my 12th birthday! I love you so much Papa and will miss you greatly! ❤️

Kyralisa Riel - April 21, 2025 at 10:01 PM

ON

“ OG and Nancy purchased the Vivid Recollections for the family of William Robert Riel.



OG and Nancy - April 21, 2025 at 07:13 PM

MG

“ Condolences and prayers for all of the Riel Families.

Mark Garibaldi - April 21, 2025 at 09:54 AM

AR

“ I'll never forget Grandpa, my favorite memories from him is when we all went fishing at Shaverlake, one of my other favorite memories is when he got me my first ever ventriloquist puppet, Steve, during my 12th birthday. I had so many memories from him, I am going to miss his smiles, we had so many memories, Fly high, Grandpa, I know you are in a better place, I miss you dearly. 🕊️❤️



Andrew Riel - April 19, 2025 at 04:17 PM

BP

“ I first met Bill at Knights Jewelers on , I believe 18th Street, when he fixed one of my old watches. When I joined St. Phillips, n 1984, I got to know him in a friendly way. When I became an usher at the 8:45 Mass, thanks to Pat Hanealt, Bill and I became close friends. He was such a great person and parishioner. We worked together on many a project with me following his lead. We always had a few friendly get togethers at the jeweler store when I shopped for various items. And of course, Charlene was there to converse, as well. The last time I was in the store, Brian assured me that Bill was well and happy. I was pleased. My heart is heavy for his loss and I so wish his family condolences. Thank God for bringing Bill into my life. Protect him and his family, ol' Lord. For few will pass this way like Bill Reil.

Ben Palmer - April 19, 2025 at 12:09 AM

BP

Should be Crillene, not Charlene

Ben Palmer - April 19, 2025 at 12:22 AM

CH

“ VIDEO - BILLY RIEL TAKES THE FAMILY ON A DEEPSEA FISHING TRIP - click the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izbh4JnNFdg>

chris - April 18, 2025 at 08:30 PM

CH

“ VIDEO MEMORY - BILLY RIEL TAKING HIS WHOLE FAMILY ON A DEEP SEA FISHING TRIP! Click the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izbh4JnNFdg>



chris - April 18, 2025 at 08:28 PM

JB

“ I will never forget Mr. Riel. He was the kindest man and I came to know him more personally by hanging out with his daughter Annie in high school youth group and then later for my first wedding ring 💍. There would be later visits to the only “Riel Jewelers” where I would always be welcomed by Bill and Crillinne. I pray for all of the family and friends grieving, Bill is a great one.



Julie Jamison Burell - April 18, 2025 at 08:24 PM

CH

“ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izbh4JnNFdg>

chris - April 18, 2025 at 08:14 PM