



William Dean Gentry

July 12, 1945 - March 8, 2026

William D. Gentry

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William Dean Gentry passed away peacefully on Sunday, March 8, 2026, in Woodstock, VA at the age of 80. Bill is the son of the late William Henry Gentry and Marion (Mattonen) Gentry and was born and raised in the Alexandria area. As a proud American, he endorsed the vision and values of the American Constitution. He loved his wife, his country and the Universe around us.

The family called him “the smart one”. He could take an auto engine apart and put it back together again by the time he was 8. At Francis C. Hammond High School, Bill studied Classical Latin, as did his mother. In his teens, he was an amateur radio operator and earned an FCC license. He graduated in the class of 1964.

While at the University of Virginia, Bill earned a First Class Commercial FCC license. With this credential, he operated a local radio station thus kick-starting his career in radio, communication and broadcasting. With a

bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering, he graduated from UVA in 1968. Thereupon, he joined a federal agency where he was employed for the next 10 years. After that, Bill was Chief Engineer at ST Research for the rest of his career.

Bill was well known in the broadcast industry as the “engineer who could save the day”. Radio station assignments took him throughout the country. During his career, he was known for his keen mind, outstanding engineering applications and refinement.

As an outdoor enthusiast, Bill enjoyed adventures that required strength, navigation and balance such as spelunking, rock climbing and skydiving. A motorcycle ride into nature brought Bill into the breathtaking Shenandoah Valley. He decided to make it his home. He spent many years as a “weekender” there and purchased his first home in Edinburgh in 1987. Bill retired at 55 and lived in Fort Valley for 13 years where he spent his time collecting and redefining old cars, as well as attending auctions, estate sales and yard sales. He was always interested in finding the best deal at the best value.

His lifetime interest in politics and politicians was influenced by his Dad who served as a Senior Page for the Senate in the 1920s.

In his earlier years, Bill had hoped for a relationship that would happily result in marriage and family. He told of actually praying for this blessing. His potential wife would have to show leadership, intelligence and kindness.

In 2005, Bill moved from Fort Valley to Woodstock and became more involved in the community. There he joined Rotary International at the invitation of Annette Petrick and that's where their love affair began. She had been executive director of a national association and a public speaker. She was

also known for writing and broadcasting the 90-minute radio show “Consider This with Annette Petrick”, which focused upon kindness and gratitude. He had indeed found his “dream girl.” Bill described their union as “the best years of my life”.

The couple merged households in 2008. They did things together: a cruise, a winter home in Florida, shopping, visiting, and dining out. But most of all, they loved just being together. Bill often said, “I feel like I'm in heaven when I'm with her”. Their love affair continued well into their senior years.

For 30 years, Bill served on the Board of Directors of radio station WUVA. He was a lifetime member of Rotary International and the Rotary Club of Woodstock.

Bill's spiritual center was based upon early Christian teachings, expanded by his broader understanding of the consciousness of God in each one of us.

William Gentry was a well-respected man loved by all who knew him. He was predeceased by his parents as well as his sister Marcia Greene. Surviving are his wife, Annette; brother Steve Gentry (Barbara), brother-in-law Steve Greene, sisters Jan Dunn (Mike), Karen Reinaldo (Tico), Nadine Smith (Jay) and many nieces and great nieces and nephews.

A memorial service honoring Bills life will be held on Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 1:30 pm, at St Paul's United Church of Christ in Woodstock.

Online condolences can be left at www.valleyfs.com

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR 18. 1:30 PM (ET)

St. Paul's United Church of Christ
235 S. Main Street
Woodstock, VA 22664

Tribute Wall

GE

“*Sad to say goodbye to my old high school and college friend. Missed a lot of years together but was glad to visit a few weeks ago. I will long remember our growing up together. Prayers for Annette, who Bill so preciously cherished.*

Greg Ewell - March 17 at 03:37 PM

JC

“*Bill was a great guy and always a gentleman. I enjoyed his friendship during his years at the Woodstoick Rotary Club. RIP, Jerry Canody*

Jerry Canody - March 12 at 12:29 PM

SN

“*Mr. Gentry would come to my brothers garage and he looked like the guy who advertised flowers, I told him he looked just like him. When he would come to get work done, I'd ask him how the flower business was going, we'd laugh. Missed you when you moved to Woodstock and now I'm going to miss seeing you occasionally in Walmart.*

Shirley Neff - March 11 at 11:11 AM

GH

“*Our thoughts and prayers are with you all during this most difficult time.*

Sending our deepest condolences,

The Gentiva Hospice Team

Gentiva Hospice - March 10 at 04:44 PM