



## William Franklin Helsley

August 22, 2011

On the morning of August 22, 2011, William Franklin Helsley, 84, died after a recent stroke under the protection of Almighty God and with deep peace. His last moments were beautiful and filled with grace and hope for us all. He was welcomed into paradise with the open arms of his wife, Renetta and his Heavenly Father. Bill died in the home he built on Senedo Road, Edinburg, Virginia, with his loving daughter, Shelia Ann Helsley, great-granddaughter, Lexi, great-grandson, Dylan, and family friend, Tomasina Stephon. He had enjoyed wonderful visits at home earlier in the week from his family and friends to say their good-byes and express their love and appreciation for the difference he made in their lives. Bill's life was an inspiring example of strong faith in God, quiet service to others, and loyalty to his church. The love of Christ was manifested in and through him in everything he did and said. Born August 30, 1926 in Ridge Hollow at the base of Three-Mile Mountain in Shenandoah County, Bill attended the Oak Ridge School House and married Renetta Florence Heltzel in 1951. They were happily married for 52 years before her death September 2003. They enjoyed an unusually loving and caring marriage, and they held each other's hands until parted by death. Bill was a decorated U.S. Army veteran of both World War II and Korea, having received the Asiatic Pacific Service Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, and the Army Occupation Medal. He received an Honorary Discharge at the end of 1946. For 40 years, Bill was a hard-working and much-beloved employee for the Virginia Department of Transportation,

retiring on the last day of 1988. He loved working with people and solving problems, building roads and even plowing snow with the crews. He could handle the most difficult situations with a strong, quiet gentleness that was his hallmark. While some leaders and pillars of faith are flamboyant or showy, Bill led a life dedicated to God and filled with humility, generosity, and integrity through all the ups and downs. His consistency in these remarkable traits meant that he was looked up to, relied upon, and admired greatly by young and old alike. He took great joy in sharing the bounty of his garden with neighbors and friends. A prized earthly possession was his handmade, garden tractor (one of a kind!) which he drove proudly gardening and giving children rides in the trailer around the property at fun events at his home. He will be so greatly missed by all those lives he touched. Preceding him in death were his parents, Joseph and Rosie Helsley; beloved wife, Renetta; brothers, Kirby, Joseph Jr., and Berlin; and sister, Gladys. He leaves his four sisters, Bettie Hepner, Jean Santmyers, Patty Ross, and Mary Miller; a granddaughter, Laura Beth; in-laws, Earl and Ellen Heltzel, Barbara Heltzel, and a great number of nieces and nephews. Bill's family extends its deepest and sincere appreciation to all who have participated in his care, including doctors, nurses (at both Shenandoah Memorial Hospital and Winchester Medical Center), rescue squad volunteers, RMH Hospice, family and friends. The family is in deep gratitude for his Drs. Andrew Waligora, Melanie Mattson, Elizabeth Cardwell and Kirk Sheap for the years of excellent care and devotion to helping him live a longer life doing all the activities he loved beyond all our expectations. Friends and Family Night will be at First Church of Columbia Furnace on Thursday, August 25 from 6:00-9:00 p.m. A funeral service will be held on Friday, August 26, at 10:00 a.m. at First Church of Columbia Furnace, with burial in Sunset Gardens in Woodstock. A meal will follow after the service. The family welcomes everyone to be part of this celebration of Bill's life and time of sharing stories and happy memories. Memorial gifts in Bill's name would be welcomed at RMH Hospice, 2010 Health Campus Drive, Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801-9905; Woodstock Rescue

Squad, 132 West Reservoir Road, Woodstock, Virginia 22664. There is also an Alexis Mikayla Helsley Lincoln and Dylan Lewis Sligh Scholarship Fund, c/o Bank of America, Trust Fund Department, 100 North Main Street, Woodstock, Virginia 22664. Pallbearers will be Bo Hawkins, Ben Draper, Gabriel Sortzi, Gretchen Sortzi, Dan Dellinger, Dale Wetzel, Dennis Heltzel and Bobby Whetzel. Honorary Pallbearers will be the Virginia Highway Department Retirees. May Bill, and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace and rise in glory.

# Tribute Wall

PK

“ Sheila, I am so sorry for your loss. I know you will be so lost without him, but like me as well I lost my Dad on 8-21-11 and I have such a big hole in my heart right now, but we know our Father's are in Heaven celebrating with past family and friends. I am looking forward to the day we will all be together again. In the mean time we need to stay strong for the rest of the family. I have left my email address for you if you would like to email me sometime to keep in touch. You take care of yourself, talk to you soon. Peggy Kile from Health Dept.

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**Peggy Kile** - September 06, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ Thank you for your thoughts and comments. Today would have been his 85 birthday. I had some plans but he'll be spending his birthday with my mother and celebrating at a much bigger party with loved ones from years and years past. I miss him so and the house is so very empty. There is so much to do I can't even get a hold on it all. But all in time, I guess. Love, she

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**Shelia Helsley** - August 30, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ You are very right! I also think they're remembering all the revivals and years of church work they did together....not to mention the highway work and your daddy's truck driving.....its a boy thing! Love to you and hard to think when we saw each other at Kent's family night, I'd be doing the same thing just a week later.....maybe its better we don't know. See you along the way, she

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**Shelia Helsley** - August 30, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ Thank you and thank you so much for the education trust gift the Dayton office gave to the children. What a wonderful way for them to remember him in the years to come with these gifts! Give my love to everyone and hope to see you again soon with updated Dayton Days information! she

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**Shelia Helsley** - August 30, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SH

“ It was such a wonderful surprise to see the two of you that evening! Thank you so much for coming! You have not changed a day since I saw you last. I know I didn't look my best and certainly don't since Daddy's passing. Life has such an empty place now and the house is so different. The children miss him so and its hard to explain to them, especially Dylan. I always knew this time was coming but you're never ready and it's never how you assumed it would be. Keep us in your prayers for strength, especially now. So much to do and I can't even get started. I made a list of top priorities.....it was four pages long! Dayton Days is on my heels now and I must get all those loose ends tied down. The other things will just have to wait. God bless you both. Keep enjoying every day together in good health! Love to you both, she-she

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**Shelia Helsley** - August 30, 2011 at 12:00 AM

AS

“ Shelia, my thoughts and prayers are with you during this time. I know the feelings you are dealing with at this time. But we can rejoice because your father is with my father and there is great rejoicing in heaven. And I am sure that both of them are talking about your father's tractor. It truly was one of a kind.

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**anita scruggs** - August 24, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SS

“ *Shelia, Lexy and Dylan, I am so very sorry for your loss. Take comfort in knowing what delight you brought to your father and grandfather. He is surely smiling from Heaven upon you now!*

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**Susan Smith** - August 24, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BF

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with your family. Mr. Helsley is with his beloved wife in the company of our Lord, where there is no more pain or suffering.*

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**Bob & Doti Ferguson** - August 23, 2011 at 12:00 AM

GH

“ *Sorry to hear of your Fathers passing and to let you know that our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. We plan on coming to to the Church Thursday evening.*

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**Glen & Virginia Ann Hulvey** - August 23, 2011 at 12:00 AM