

Classmate Obituary - William Jefferson Boehler (11 December 2002)



William "Bill Jefferson" Boehler, 54, of Rock Island, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2002, at his home.

Services will be 11 a.m. Monday at Esterdahl Mortuary, 6601 38th Ave., Moline. Burial will be in National Cemetery, Arsenal Island. Visitation will be 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday at the funeral home. Memorials may be made to the family.

Bill was born Nov. 17, 1948, in Moline, the son of Dorothy "Pat" and Mark Boehler. Mark and Pat divorced a few years later and she married Raymond Jefferson. Jeff unofficially changed Bill's name to Jefferson when he was in second grade. Bill reverted back to Boehler just prior to graduation from United Township High School. He was the only male at class reunions with a maiden name on his name tag. He enjoyed telling confused class peers that "he got married."

Bill began work at John Deere Harvester Product Engineering Department in 1967, after a brief stint working in the Clocktower Building at the Rock Island Arsenal. He retired from Deere in 1997 as a designer. During this span, he attended classes at Blackhawk College.

Bill was drafted into the Army in 1969 and served 14 months in Da Nang, Vietnam, as a construction draftsman. Among the medals he received were the Bronze Star and the Army Commendation Medal.

Bill enjoyed golf, gardening, people and fishing. At the top of his list was the 27 "Roughing It" camping trips he took to Canada and northernmost Minnesota, and the 32 assorted friends he shared the trips with. He felt he missed his calling as a caterer, as he enjoyed planning parties and seeing that everyone enjoyed themselves. He originated the "Wormburner" Golf Tournament at John Deere Product Engineering Department and was chairman/vice president of the John Deere mixed softball league pig roast for several years.

Survivors (and spouses) include daughter, Stacy Boehler, Davenport; son, Todd Boehler, Rock Island; sister, Beverly (Don) Davidson, East Moline; brothers, Ron (Carol) Cobert, Moline, Collin Jefferson, East Moline, and Raymond "Skip" (Teresa) Jefferson, Moline. Included as part of Bill's family are special friends, Dan and Diana Soots, Coal Valley, and Alda Toye, Rock Island.