



Dr. William D. Grange

June 11, 1927 - December 29, 2020

Dr. William D. Grange

Dr. William DeSart Grange, a longtime resident of Grand Island, died in Papillion, NE, on December 29, 2020. Bill was born on June 11, 1927, in Mobridge, SD. One of nine children, his parents were Ross Stuart Grange and Anna Ruth (DeSart) Grange.

Bill graduated from Mobridge High School and joined the U.S. Navy in June 1945. He served in the South Pacific on the USS Curtiss and spent 10 months in Okinawa, Japan and China. Bill then attended Northern State Teachers College in Aberdeen, SD, where he met Mary Matthews, the love of his life. He always said that he didn't object to paying taxes because his life was forever changed thanks to the G.I. Bill and the education he received.

In 1951, Bill received his Doctor of Optometry degree from the Northern Illinois College of Optometry in Chicago. He and Mary were married on June 2, 1951, in Pierre, SD. Mary was his true and loving partner, who laughed at all his funny comments while sharing her intuitive observations and sage advice. They lived briefly in Tyndall, SD, where he practiced optometry and their two oldest children were born.

In 1954, the Granges moved to Grand Island, NE, where Bill joined the

practice of Dr. E. E. Bilon at 216 North Locust Street. He practiced optometry for 45 years and was recognized by the Nebraska Optometric Association and the American Optometric Association for his dedication to the profession.

Bill was loved by his patients of all ages, reveled in knowing many generations of Central Nebraska families and always had time for a story and a laugh. When he retired, one young man wrote him a letter saying, "Who will I stop and see when I come back to Grand Island? You are the only person who remembers my folks." An extrovert in the true sense of the word, Bill was outgoing, gregarious and friendly. He loved talking to people and relished hearing--and telling--stories. Bill was a lifelong learner, who was always interested in finding out about people's experiences, careers and travels. He was kind to everyone and gifted at putting people at ease and lightening up situations with a funny remark.

The Granges were longtime members of St. Mary's Cathedral, where Bill took up the collection and was a Boy Scout leader. In 1977, they joined St. Leo's Parish Community.

Bill was a loyal member of the Lions Club for 60 years. He was a charter member of the Grand Island Little Theater and played the starring role of Grandpa in You Can't Take It With You, the group's first production in 1960. He had roles in The Man Who Came to Dinner, Gazebo and My Three Angels. He also helped start the first Toastmaster's Club in Grand Island and one year took first place in the state humorous speech contest.

In the 1970s, Bill was named to the Nebraska Comprehensive Health Care Planning Board, where he represented the optometry profession for a three-year term.

Bill was an avid outdoorsman, who hunted pheasants for more than 75 years.

He and sons Jim and Tom spent many happy days hunting at their farm in Trenton, NE. Bill also loved to fish and spend time in the Colorado mountains. He was a dedicated vegetable gardener.

Bill and Mary enjoyed their friends and neighbors at Kuester's Lake, where they lived for 37 years. Bill was a charter member of the Saddle Club and served as president of the Board of Directors. After his retirement, Bill and Mary spent 24 winters on South Padre Island, TX, where they were part of a large community of "Winter Texan" friends.

Bill was dedicated to the work of the Grand Island Literacy Council, where he and Mary volunteered as English-language tutors for many years. He helped recent immigrants' study for their GED exams and citizenship tests and learned Spanish in order to help them. He referred to himself as "The World's Oldest Tutor." He was also involved in Meals on Wheels and Habitat for Humanity projects.

In 2011, Bill and Mary moved to Riverside Lodge and later to the Grand Lodge at Hillcrest in Papillion, NE to be closer to their son, Tom.

Bill is survived by his beloved children Mary Beth Harper of Kent, OH; Jim (Pam) Grange of Denver, CO; Tom (Cindy) Grange of Bellevue, NE; and Cass Grange (Thomas Moe) of Austin, TX. He leaves devoted grandchildren Kate Harper Goodine (Dave), Sam Harper (Jenny), Will Harper, Etta Grange Skoch (Matt), Kipp Grange (Jenna), Fae Grange, Jack Grange (Rachael), Maggie Grange, Cathryn Grange, Eric Moe (Daniela), Andy Moe and step-grandchildren Alyssa Thomas (Travis), Logan Tyler (Jaynee) and Mason Tyler, as well as 18 great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife Mary, who died in July 2020, son Jack,

who died of cancer in 1974, granddaughter Mary Cathryn, who died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome in 1987, and his brothers Jim, Dick and Dint, as well as sisters Lorrie, Dorrie, Cathy, Jean and Beth.

Services will be held for Bill and Mary Grange at St. Leo's at a later date. Donations can be sent to the Grand Island Literacy Council at 115 W. Charles, Grand Island, NE, 68801 or to the Central Catholic Development Foundation/Grange Family Memorial at 1200 North Ruby Ave., Grand Island, Ne 68803. Messages of sympathy can be sent to Dr. Tom Grange, 17312 Iris Circle, Bellevue, NE 68123. All Faiths Funeral Home is entrusted with the arrangements.

Tribute Wall



“ *Dr. William D. Grange*

October 08, 2023 at 11:02 PM



“ *Tom and family. So very sorry to hear of your Mom and Dad's passing. They were two of the nicest people on the planet. As I recall my Mom and Dad used to play tennis with them. They always said what great people the Grange's were. We are so happy that God gave them good, long, healthy lives. We are thinking of you and praying for your family. Hopefully we will see you sometime in the future to catch up. God bless your Mom and Dad and your family. Take care Tom.*

jan and Rick Brown - January 19, 2021 at 11:04 PM



“ *I remember Bill as the best Master of Ceremonies at a Nebraska Optometric Association Conference a good number of years ago - such a dry sense of humor! RIP (Steve Jacobsen, OD)*

Dr Steven V. Jacobsen - January 06, 2021 at 01:54 PM



“ *Bill always brought joy and laughter in every room. He loved sharing tales and jokes and brought happiness to all, He will be sorely missed. ,,,Roberta Bobby Hayhurst, friend*

Bobby Hayhurst - January 03, 2021 at 03:49 PM

DK

“ Dr. Grange was our family eye doctor. .
My mother raised chickens and also had eggs for sale.
So we got our eye exams done by giving Dr. Grange chickens.
The good old days!
RIP. Dr. Grange

Delyce Luft Knuth - January 03, 2021 at 01:13 PM

RM

“ Doc fitted me with my 1st pair of contact lenses when I was very young. He was truly a fixture around town and was one of the funniest guys I ever met. He had the vernacular of a jazz musician. A kind man and great human being.
Ron Mills

Ron Mills - January 03, 2021 at 09:28 AM



“ I will forever miss “Uncle Bill and Auntie Mary.” As much as I truly care for all of my residents, Mary and Bill touched my heart in a special way. I will miss Bill’s quick wit and sense of humor. I will miss the reminiscing and teasing. He was truly one of the sweetest and loving men I have ever known. Thank you for the honor of taking care of both “Uncle Bill and Auntie Mary.”

Lisa Moran - January 03, 2021 at 08:17 AM

AR

“ I was just thinking of ole Doc and Chicky Babe the other day!! Your parents both made their time at Riverside Lodge enjoyable for everyone around them!! He had nicknames for my kids, she would correct him!! Thank you Grange family for sharing Bill and Mary with us!!! ❤️Angi Rork

Angi Rork - January 01, 2021 at 05:40 PM

RM

“ We are so sorry to hear of “Wild Bill’s” passing. Sending our thoughts and prayers for the entire family.

Ron and Barb Matousek

Ron Matousek - January 01, 2021 at 08:40 AM