



Robert Billy Yates Sr

April 30, 1936 - January 26, 2015

ROBERT BILLY "BILL" YATES, SR., age 78 of Gainesville, Virginia passed away Monday, January 26, 2015 at Winchester Medical Center.

Bill was born April 30, 1936 in Big Rock, Virginia son of the late James Harvey and Martha Edgar (Street) Yates He joined the United States Air Force in 1952. Among his careers were Kentucky Colonel, member of the Country Gentlemen Bluegrass Band for 20 years and named Ambassador of Bluegrass in 2004. He was inducted into Hall of Greats in Nashville, Tennessee and Virginia Folk Music Hall of Fame. He performed with Jimmy Martin for six years and Bill Monroe for one year. Bill along with his brother, Wayne were known as "The Yates Brothers" Band. He currently was with the Country Gentlemen Tribute Band.

He was also preceded in death by his son, Robert Billy Yates, Jr.; one sister, Maudine Simms and two brothers, Wayne Yates and Estel Yates.

Survivors include one daughter, Brenda K. Cohen and husband Kevin of Monroe Township, New Jersey; daughter-in-law, Renee Yates; one sister, Ruth Brown of Spotsylvania, Virginia; four grandchildren, Keli Santiago (Isaac), Kyle Cohen (Julie), Kevin Cohen, Jr. (Janelle) and Kara Colon and eight great-grandchildren, Isaac Santiago, Mason Santiago, Harper Cohen, Anicia Colon, Emanuel Colon, Jr., Alex Colon, Jessica Mount and Allison

Mount: Companion, Helen Lafollette.

The family will receive friends from 6:00-8:00 P.M. Saturday, January 31, 2015 and Sunday, February 1, 2015 from 3:00-5:00 P.M. at Pierce Funeral Home, 9609 Center Street, Manassas, Virginia where funeral services will be held 12:00 P.M. Monday, February 2, 2015. Interment will follow at Stonewall Memory Gardens, Manassas, Virginia.

Pallbearers will be Dave Bedard, Ben Hamman, Kyle Cohen, Kevin Cohen, Jr., Isaac Santiago, Gary Brown, Billy Brown and Scott Brannon. Honorary Pallbearers will be members of the Country Gentlemen Tribute Band.

Cemetery Details

Stonewall Memory Gardens

12004 Lee Highway
Manassas, VA 20109
<http://www.stonewallmemorygardens.com>

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 31. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home
9609 Center St.
Manassas, VA 20110
(703) 257-6028
pfh@piercefh.com
<https://www.piercefh.com>

Visitation

FEB 1. 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home
9609 Center St.
Manassas, VA 20110
(703) 257-6028
pfh@piercefh.com
<https://www.piercefh.com>

Service

FEB 2. 12:00 PM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home
9609 Center St.
Manassas, VA 20110
(703) 257-6028
pfh@piercefh.com
<https://www.piercefh.com>

Tribute Wall

JJ

“ *Big man with a big heart.. Our condolences to all his loved ones.*

Gene and June Johnson

June Johnson - February 02, 2015 at 10:58 AM

TP

“ *Rest In Peace, My sympathy to the family and loved ones.*
Terry P.

Terry P. - February 02, 2015 at 08:10 AM

SC

“ *Sherry Mathews Clark sends sympathy. Fond memories of Bluegrass Festivals of days gone by. "How Great Thou Art"*

Sherry Mathews Clark - January 31, 2015 at 04:18 PM

LT

“ *Larry and Tamara Troupe purchased the Fall Fantasia for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.*



Larry and Tamara Troupe - January 31, 2015 at 12:42 PM

SG

“ *Our sincere sympathy to Bill's family and friends. He was a legend who will always be remembered through his music. Sam and Diana Glynn*

Sam and Diana Glynn - January 30, 2015 at 02:47 PM



“ *Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.*



January 30, 2015 at 02:12 PM



“ *RALPH T. HESTER purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.*



RALPH T. HESTER - January 30, 2015 at 01:32 PM



“ *Donna lit a candle in memory of Robert Billy Yates Sr*



Donna - January 30, 2015 at 01:00 PM



“ *Verna Rodes / MasterShield Records purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.*



Verna Rodes / MasterShield Records - January 30, 2015 at 10:19 AM

YA

“ *Yakdhan Bahjat Alatia purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.*



Yakdhan Bahjat Alatia - January 30, 2015 at 09:31 AM

LS

“ *Bill was a long time friend, a mentor for me and many of my band members....a good guy that will be missed by all of us! Thank you Bill for all you've done for the music you loved so much, Bluegrass!*

*Larry, Dreama & Whysper Stephenson
The Larry Stephenson Band*

Larry Stephenson - January 30, 2015 at 09:09 AM

RA

“ *1 file added to the album Tribute Wall*



Rick Allred - January 29, 2015 at 07:34 PM

RA

I have some great memories of Bill from 1979-1981. It is an honor and privilege to call him a friend.

Rick Allred - January 29, 2015 at 07:38 PM

GM

“ Bill was a very warm and caring person with such a wonderful sense of humor. All you had to do was follow the sound of laughter and Bill would be right in the middle telling stories about growing up in Virginia. Bill would describe all sorts of predicaments that he'd gotten into with his brother Wayne and friends (with a little embellishment) and we would hold our sides laughing. And we loved to hear his band's music - toe tapping music - you really couldn't sit still. Now Bill's still playing his Bluegrass music for the angels to hear. God bless you - glad you were here! Love ya',
Georgia Mangan

Georgia Mangan - January 29, 2015 at 06:52 PM

JM

“ Our prayers and thoughts go out to the family. Jimmy Mathews and family.

Jimmy Mathews - January 29, 2015 at 05:57 PM

CA

“ So sorry to hear about Mr. Yates. Have enjoyed his music for a long time and was so happy when he came to Winchester, VA and shared his voice with Springfield Exit.
He certainly will not be forgotten. Prayers for his family.

carolyn - January 29, 2015 at 03:05 PM

JR

“ Jim and Shari Reed purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.



Jim and Shari Reed - January 29, 2015 at 01:32 PM

BM

“ I was saddened with news of your passing, but we know that you are in a better place, pain free and playing your music. You will be missed by many. It was a pleasure getting to know you over the past years and attending some of your concerts. You will always be in our memory. You are in good hands.

Barry & Georgia Mangan - January 29, 2015 at 12:19 PM

TQ

“ We have lost a great bluegrass musician and friend. Will be missed at shows and festivals.
Sincerely
Tom Queen

Tom Queen - January 29, 2015 at 11:40 AM

CH

“ Uncle Bill . . I was so sad to hear of your passing , but at the same time , felt comforted that you are now in a pain-free and worry-free place with Grans and Estel and Maudine and Mimal and all of the other family that we love . . I loved talking to you ever month when you would call :) I wish you could have met my Ashton , he loves some bluegrass music , but I know one day in time we will all be reunited in heaven , just like the classic reunions we used to have at your place ! I never even thought of you as distant as a "great uncle" you were the closest uncle I have ever had , out of any ! You were always just "Uncle Bill" and you will always be that :) We shall miss you and think of you often , keeping your memory alive through old pictures , stories , and of course music . . "It's never really over" I love you !!! Love, Courtney Hutcheson

Courtney Hutcheson - January 29, 2015 at 10:58 AM

KV

“ MY DEAR, SWEET, PRECIOUS UNCLE BILL...I HURT SO MUCH BECAUSE I AM REALLY GOING TO MISS YOU AND ALL OF OUR MEMORIES TOGETHER. I AM, HOWEVER, GLAD THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER SUFFERING, I HATED TO SEE YOU LAYING THERE...I SAW YOU THE DAY BEFORE YOU WERE CALLED HOME AND YOU GAVE ME A SMILE AND TOLD ME YOU LOVED ME. I WILL CHERISH THAT FOREVER. PLEASE GIVE MY GRANDDADDY (WAYNE) A BIG KISS FROM ME. YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MY FAVORITE UNCLE (OUR LITTLE SECRET)! DON'T WORRY ABOUT US, WE WILL BE OKAY. WE WILL GRIEVE BECAUSE WE WILL IN FACT MISS YOU BUT WE KNOW YOU ARE IN A BETTER PLACE. WATCH OVER US ALL. I LOVE YOU WITH ALL OF MY HEART. UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN....LOVE ALWAYS, YOUR GREAT-NIECE, KRISTIN MICHELE

KRISTIN VIPRAIO - January 29, 2015 at 09:31 AM

BW

“ *Bill, Lee, Billy, Kristin, Keira and William purchased the Ocean Breeze Spray for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.*



Bill, Lee, Billy, Kristin, Keira and William - January 29, 2015 at 08:36 AM

DA

“ Thanks for all of the Wonderful years of Music and Memories and May God Bless Your Family, Friends and Many Fans!

Dave Alexander



Dave Alexander - January 29, 2015 at 01:25 AM

LH

“ Mr. Bill Yates, Thank you for all the wonderful music you've shared with us over the years. I am so glad that I finally got to meet you last year at Lucketts and again at a bluegrass festival. I loved hearing your stories and jokes. Thoughts & Prayers for the Yates family. I'm sorry for your loss, Lynn

Lynn M of Haymarket - January 29, 2015 at 12:29 AM

WB

“ William E. Brown purchased the Lily and Rose Tribute Spray for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.



William E. Brown - January 29, 2015 at 12:02 AM

WM

“ *For several years Bill would spend part of the winter here with us in Florida. We became family. He never ran out of stories to tell and we shared love and laughter. We will always treasure those times. Bill was a wonderful person and we will miss him. Our sympathy to his family. May God Bless his family. Wade and LaVergne Morse.*

Wade Morse - January 28, 2015 at 06:41 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.*



January 28, 2015 at 06:36 PM

LG

“ Uncle Bill I want to thank you for the wonderful memories over the years. We spent a lot of quality family time together, whether it was family dinners, jam sessions or just talking over the phone. After my Dad passed away you stepped in as a father-figure to me in the time of need. I have received numerous calls from you over the past year, as you were concerned for some challenges that I have been going through. You were a very honest and truthful person and would always give me your best advice, just like my Dad would do. I will cherish all of the times when you would join my Dad and I in singing three part harmony on a song and your response was "that has got to be the closest three part harmony I have ever heard." Thanks for your encouragement in my music and the mentorship that you provided. When I saw you in the hospital this past Sunday you told me that you loved me and gave me a "big" smile. I will cherish that moment forever. Until we meet again - you will be in my heart forever. -- Lee Goswellen

Lee Goswellen - January 28, 2015 at 05:31 PM

KC

“ Kevin C. purchased the Bright and Beautiful Spray for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.



Kevin C. - January 28, 2015 at 02:48 PM

KS

“ Keli S. purchased the Rose Garden Heart for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.



Keli S. - January 28, 2015 at 02:44 PM

JA

“Farewell to a great friend and musician. My wife Margaret & I looked forward to seeing Bill at various venues over the years. The most recent is the Springfield Exit Bluegrass show at the GW Hotel in Winchester, Va. He enjoyed the lemon treats my wife always brought him and rewarded her with a big hug. May God's blessings be with all his family, friends, and musicians who knew him. We will miss him dearly and take comfort in knowing he has now joined the Master's most esteemed bluegrass band! The last song he sang at GW Hotel in December was "The Green Green Grass of Home to a standing ovation. Praise God he is now at peace with Jesus. God speed Bill, and we miss you and love you.

*John and Margaret Armentrout
Berkeley Springs, WV*

John Armentrout - January 28, 2015 at 02:43 PM

LG

“Love Karen and Gertrude purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.



Love Karen and Gertrude - January 28, 2015 at 01:59 PM

SB

“ Our precious friend, Bill Yates you'll forever live within our hearts; you never went alone buddy as part of our hearts went with you. Thanks for all the wonderful laughs & memories; we'll cherish forever! You were our dearest friend and we loved you to the moon and back. RIP buddy, you're now in the hands of the greatest care taker of all, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Love, Shirley & Dave Bedard



Shirley & Dave Bedard - January 28, 2015 at 12:05 PM

BH

“ Thank you Bill for the love and friendship you have shown to me and my wife . You brought smiles to us every time we were together . I will forever hold dear my memories of you and our trips together to Nashville , cabinfever, Bean Blossom Ind etc . I learned a lot from you . I've been blessed to be a part of your loving and caring family . God sure did bless the whole world with you so thankful he shared you with us. I look forward to the day when we can pick and sing with you again and you will forever be the best pal I ever had love you brother until we meet again always your friends love Ben and Tina

Ben Hamman - January 28, 2015 at 11:55 AM

BM

Bill It was a real pleasure knowing you and spending time with you at Ben and Tina's. You made me laugh and you were a true blessing to my life. You will be truly missed. I know you are so happy and pain free now for you are with our sweet savior Jesus Christ. I hope you and Barry are singing together with the Angels. Till we meet again. Love you... Brenda Mauck

Brenda Mauck - January 28, 2015 at 04:27 PM

SP

“ *Although I have not seen Bill in many years, we became friends in the early 1970's Bill was working with the Country Gentlemen, and he had a delightful sense of humor. RIP, Bill Yates.*

Sheila Pollak - January 28, 2015 at 11:27 AM

GH

“ *I've known Bill since 1969. We've spent many hours recording his wonderful music in my studio. Besides his brother, Wayne, I've never known anyone with more stories or a greater sense of humor. I've never known him to have a negative thought about anyone or anything. I will miss his phone calls and visits. Sadly, we have lost another music legend. May he rest in peace with the Lord.*

George Hodgkiss



George Hodgkiss - January 28, 2015 at 11:25 AM

JH

“ *John Henderson lit a candle in memory of Robert Billy Yates Sr*



John Henderson - January 28, 2015 at 10:45 AM

MH

“ *My precious Uncle Bill was always revered as the professional musician who gave his all in the music industry, entertaining and warming the hearts of all his many fans, friends, and family who were so proud of his accomplishments. We ate, sang, laughed, cried, camped, fished, and traveled with him through his many blessed years. He was not only my beloved Uncle but I was blessed to take care of his personal insurance needs also. I always looked forward to hearing from him monthly, while on the road, to make his payment. The staff also knew him over the years as Uncle Bill. He was faithful to the end of his journey to let God reveal His glory through him while going through his illness. My heart is heavy but my soul rejoices at the blessed reunion that must be going on now and forever in Heaven with my Daddy, and all our family and friends who have reached the Golden Shore. We have been left a heritage of memories and music that will sustain us until we go be with them. God comfort the family and keep us in the bond of love through your son Jesus Christ, our hope. I love you Uncle Bill!!!!*
Your, niece, Melissa

Melissa Yates Hutcheson - January 28, 2015 at 10:25 AM



“ I spent many happy hours with Bill, introducing him as a member of the Sunny Mountain Boys and Country Gentlemen, on stages from Maine to Florida to Oklahoma. He was a true gentlemen, reliable, and always personable. May he rest in peace.
Fred Bartenstein

Fred Bartenstein - January 28, 2015 at 09:42 AM



“ My heart and prayers go out to all the Family in their time of sorrow. I only know Bill through the music he helped create over the years and I did meet him once.
Through his music, he will always be remembered and never forgotten.

*Sincerely,
KY Colonel Terry Thacker
Colonel Terry's Bluegrass Corner
95.5 FM The Hawk, Kendallville Ind*

Terry W Thacker - January 28, 2015 at 09:01 AM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.*



January 28, 2015 at 08:33 AM

SH

“ Sandi Henderson lit a candle in memory of Robert Billy Yates Sr



Sandi Henderson - January 28, 2015 at 08:08 AM

KC

“ "Grandpa Yates" is how my kids and I know him.....a kindhearted,genuine man,always happy. Ive never seen him not happy...always telling jokes. I always knew if i sat down next to him,he'd keep me laughing. You were a good man Grandpa and we're all going to miss you. Rest easy,and keep playing your music. Heavens gained a great man. We love you.

Kara Colon - January 28, 2015 at 07:06 AM

JB

“ I'm so sorry to hear of Bill's passing, Condolences to the family. I, being a bluegrass fan, had a great admiration for Bill and all he has done for the bluegrass world. He was always super nice to me & willing to take time to visit with me. RIP Bill!

Jeff Barnett - January 28, 2015 at 06:53 AM

FR

“ 1 file added to the album Tribute Wall



Fred Robbins - January 28, 2015 at 06:39 AM

KD

“ As I reflect on memories of my dear friend, Bill Yates, I am touched by the warm thoughts and kind words so many are posting. I can see Bill standing and turning to face you all, head held high, with a huge smile while waving and taking a bow saying, " Thank you, Thank you all so much!" I remember at a young age standing by to meet the members of the Country Gentlemen for pictures and autographs, then to find years later a deep friendship with many of them. Bill always greeted me with a smile & hug, making me feel like he was more excited to see me than I was him...which was never the case. He encouraged me, coached me, mentored me, made me laugh with his stories that always ended in a joke, and graced me by singing with me. To say I'll miss him is an understatement...I'm rich for knowing him and look forward to seeing him again & hearing him sing, "I'll break out tonight"...Rest now, Bill

Kathy Davis - January 27, 2015 at 11:55 PM

KD

“ 1 file added to the album Tribute Wall



Kathy Davis - January 27, 2015 at 11:51 PM



“ Written in the Stars was purchased for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.



January 27, 2015 at 11:38 PM

NW

“ Nancy & Tom Woodward lit a candle in memory of Robert Billy Yates Sr



nancy & Tom Woodward - January 27, 2015 at 09:46 PM

NW

Bill, was so much fun to be with. When we all would go to eat with him he would start telling his stories and we all would laugh until our faces would hurt. We had to be careful not to choke on our food. He will be missed by all who knew him....

nancy Woodward - January 27, 2015 at 09:54 PM

BS

“ Bill, I first want to thank you for your friendship these last 40+ years. You always treated me as a dear friend and fellow musician, and showed me kindness each time we got together. Your brother, Wayne, molded me into a musician, and you always encouraged me. I was privileged to travel with you and pick with you and Charlie. I will always be grateful to you and your family for accepting me as a family "member". May God rest your soul, as you join that great bluegrass band in Heaven. You will be sorely missed, but only for a while. We will meet again one day. My wife, Helen and I will always remember the good times with you! We grieve at our loss. All of our love and friendship forever. Your friend, Buster and Helen Sexton

Buster & Helen Sexton - January 27, 2015 at 08:57 PM

NM

“ You gave each of us a never ending smile. Your genuineness, your encouragement, your sense of humor. We will always cherish having a piece of you in our hearts. There is no doubt that you loved Jesus and it showed in everything you touched. Our life on this old Earth is short and precious, but I everlasting home is Paradise. I look forward to singing with you again dear friend, in Glory! What a happy day that will be!

Nancy McCloud - January 27, 2015 at 08:57 PM

RY

“ I remember when I was still in elementary school my mom would take me on occasion to the Shamrock in Georgetown because she wanted to see The Country Gentlemen. Of course I could never make it to the end of the night and would fall a sleep on the chairs, then she would wake me up and you and Charlie Waller would walk over to talk and say what a cute kid I was. Then years later who would know that I would have met your son and married him and you became my father in-law. A lot of people don't like their in laws but I couldn't have picked better ones then the ones I got. You were and are a special man to many. I know there is a lot of music going on up there in heaven especially you and Rob. The Yates family has heaven rocking. Love you and we will see each other again one day. XOXO

Renee Yates - January 27, 2015 at 08:45 PM

HR

“ Hank & Betty Richards lit a candle in memory of Robert Billy Yates Sr



Hank & Betty Richards - January 27, 2015 at 08:17 PM

HR

Our Prayers and blessings go out to Bill's Family and all the bluegrass fans who loved him as We did. Rest In Peace Bill.

Hank & Betty Richards - January 27, 2015 at 08:23 PM

PW

“ *We will miss you, Bill. RIP*

Pam & Bill Warren - January 27, 2015 at 08:16 PM

JB

“ *1 file added to the album New Album Name*



Joan Bullard - January 27, 2015 at 08:14 PM



“ *?Grandpa?*

So sad that you are gone. We were just together on new years and had no idea you were so sick. You have always been so strong. I am so glad Jesus gave us a miracle and woke u up from your sleep so I could talk to you on the phone one last time. Wish we could've kept you here forever. Jesus needed another angel and got one of the best. Maybe he needed to hear some bluegrass music ;) I hope you can see all your grandkids grow and be their guardian angel. I know you will. We will miss all the music and stories you tell. You are loved by so many. I'm so lucky to be your granddaughter. I was always so proud of you. I hope my boys take after their pawpaw. I will always cherish the memories we have. I Love and miss you so much. Xoxo



Keli Cohen Santiago - January 27, 2015 at 08:10 PM

BC

He was proud of his grandchildren and great grandchildren and love each one very much?

Brenda Yates Cohen - January 27, 2015 at 08:20 PM

KW

“ *Prayers for peace and comfort to Bill's family and friends; and many thanks to his family for sharing him with the world. Bill was a treasure to many.*

Ken & Lisa Whitley - January 27, 2015 at 08:09 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Robert Billy Yates Sr.*



January 27, 2015 at 07:39 PM

PM

“ *Uncle Bill, you will be missed by us all. Always loved being around you listening to your music, enjoying your fun sense of humor. I will always remember how you said you would be there for us after daddy passed. It meant so much to all of us. Feeling Blessed to know you are with the Lord and we will meet again someday.*



Love,

Patricia Marlin

Patricia Marlin - January 27, 2015 at 07:25 PM

LS

“ Bill was so dear to our family. We got to know Bill when he traveled to Eustis Florida in the winter. We have so many fond memories of Bill pickin and singing at our jams. Thank you so much Bill for teaching our son Randall to sing bariton. You will always be in our hearts. We love you. Randy and Linda Screws and son Randall.



Linda Screws - January 27, 2015 at 07:18 PM

CB

“ Mr. Bill Yates, I am so glad to have met you and got to know what a wonderful man you were. I have laughed so many times at your funny stories. I suppose the best part of knowing you was that we shared our birthday together, oh, minus the same year, ha. Most important, you shared so many wonderful memories and fulfilled a lot of good times with my very best friend, Helen.. May you rest in the arms of Jesus and continue those songs of praise for our Heavenly Father and the Angels. Carolyn Brown

Carolyn Brown - January 27, 2015 at 07:17 PM

BC

“ Dad...I was so proud to call you my daddy. I thank God for the special moment you whispered to me "I love you"..You must be pretty special to our Lord because he chose you to touch so many people? I love you?



Brenda Yates Cohen - January 27, 2015 at 07:06 PM

BC

Oophs..Disregard the ?'s above.. *people. * I love you.

Brenda Yates Cohen - January 27, 2015 at 07:24 PM



So sorry Brenda. He was so sweet and precious. So glad he is with my grandma and his brothers. He will be missed.

Angela Franklin - January 27, 2015 at 08:32 PM