



William John Van Balen

April 5, 1929 - June 29, 2025

William John “Bill” Van Balen passed away peacefully on June 29, 2025, in Manassas, VA, after a brief decline in health at the age of 96.

Born in Albany, New York on April 5, 1929, he was the eldest child of Beatrice Farrell and John Van Balen. He grew up in the Chicago suburbs, and graduated from Leyden High School in 1947. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from Culver Stockton College in Canton, Missouri in 1951, where he was a proud member of Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity.

While in college, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy Reserves, stationed in Great Lakes, Illinois. After being honorably discharged in 1952, he enlisted in the U.S. Army at Fort Knox, Kentucky, receiving his specialist training at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. He was then deployed to Heilbronn am Neckar, Germany, to serve as a Corporal in the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 502D Communication Reconnaissance Group (a unit of the Army Security Agency) working as a cryptologist in the Allied Occupation of post-war Germany.

While stationed in Heilbronn, he met his future wife, Trudy Kössinger. Bill and Trudy were married in 1955 in Valley Forge, PA. They settled in Annandale, VA as Bill started his career as a Patent Examiner with the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). His work earned him numerous accolades from the Commissioner, including a Bronze Award in 1988, for excellence, quality, and productivity. He was a highly regarded Patent Examiner, training junior staff in research while helping the USPTO transition into the digital era. He retired in 1989 with almost 40 years of combined government service.

For Bill, retirement was just the beginning. He took up guitar lessons, joined a band, and became an avid competitive swimmer. He trained and competed with the DC Masters and won medals and awards at regional, state and national events, including the Senior Olympics. Remarkably, his love of swimming likely helped extend the quality of his well-lived, long life.

Bill was a member of the Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Illinois, D.C. Cregier Lodge No. 81, Wheeling, Illinois, since 1951, and held the 32nd degree in the Scottish Rite Valley of Chicago for 73 years. He was a Kena Shriner for 65 years, supporting the Shriners Hospitals for Children and other charitable endeavors. He played guitar with the Kena Hillbillies Band in Fairfax, Virginia, and joined them in various holiday parades. As a life member of the Arlington-Fairfax Elks Lodge 2188, he was often found volunteering on bingo nights, participating in fundraisers, attending dances, or traveling with group excursions.

Bill's love of service further extended into his surrounding community. He served on the Broyhill Crest Recreation Association Board of Directors and as their Swim Team Representative. Fairfax County 4-H also benefited from his service during Fair time. He was a faithful, long-standing member of St. Albans Episcopal Church in Annandale, Virginia.

He was a devoted husband, father, and a generous and loving grandfather. His grandchildren were his heart's delight.

Bill lived life to the fullest. In all of his activities, projects, travel, and conversations, he never once met a stranger—he had a remarkable ability to make everyone feel like family. Filled with warmth, enthusiasm, and more than his fair share of jokes that would roll eyes and return smiles, he garnered lifelong friendships that lasted well into his golden years. Classmates called him “a swell guy,” and that enduring charm carried through to his final days at Capitol Ridge Independent Living in Bristow, Virginia, where he continued to connect, laugh, and leave a lasting impression on everyone he met.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Carl and Don, and his wife of 66 years, Trudy. He is survived by his adopted daughter Christina (Thomas) Harrigan; grandchildren Megan and Sean Harrigan; his sister-in-law, niece, and extended family.

A Masonic Service followed by a Christian funeral will be held at 2:00pm on Friday, August 8, at Pierce Funeral Home, Manassas, Virginia. A catered Reception will follow at 3:00pm. Interment will be at Quantico National Cemetery at 1:00pm, Monday August 11, 2025.

Flowers may be sent to Pierce Funeral Home, 9609 Center St, Manassas, VA 20110 through Flowers 'n Ferns (703-455-3100 or <https://flowersnferns.com/>). In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in memory of William Van Balen to St. Albans Episcopal Church, 6800 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003 or to Shriners Children's Hospitals at <https://www.shrinerschildrens.org/en/ways-to-give/donate>.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG 8. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

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

Reception

AUG 8. 3:00 PM (ET)

Pierce Funeral Home Celebration Room
9609 Center Street
Manassas, VA 20110
<https://www.piercefh.com/who-we-are/celebration-room>

Graveside Service

AUG 11. 1:00 PM - 1:30 PM (ET)

Quantico National Cemetery
18424 Joplin Road
Triangle, VA

Tribute Wall

CS

“ *Cousin : Vince Serritella purchased the Crystal Cross Bouquet for the family of William John Van Balen.*



Cousin : Vince Serritella - August 06, 2025 at 03:24 PM

CH

“ *8 files added to the album Bill Van Balen*



Christina Harrigan - August 04, 2025 at 10:16 PM

DH

“ *Donna Hyatt lit a candle in memory of William John Van Balen*



Donna Hyatt - August 04, 2025 at 04:22 PM

DH

Christine, I am so sorry for your loss, your father lived a great and memorable life. Keeping you and your family in my thoughts and prayers

Donna Hyatt - August 04, 2025 at 04:24 PM

FT

“ *RIP*



frank titus - August 03, 2025 at 02:42 PM

HM

“ *Heidemarie McDowell lit a candle in memory of William John Van Balen*



Heidemarie McDowell - August 03, 2025 at 11:58 AM

RS

“ *Raymond, Tina and Stefan purchased the Enduring Grace for the family of William John Van Balen.*



Raymond, Tina and Stefan - August 01, 2025 at 10:39 AM

KH

“ *Klaus Und Tine Hellstern lit a candle in memory of William John Van Balen*



Klaus und Tine Hellstern - July 30, 2025 at 02:22 PM

FG

“ *From Andreas Vogt, Germany purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of William John Van Balen.*



From Andreas Vogt, Germany - July 29, 2025 at 04:01 PM

CH

“ *Christina Harrigan lit a candle in memory of William John Van Balen*



Christina Harrigan - July 28, 2025 at 02:08 PM