

## **Raymond Gill "Pete" Williams Jr.**



Raymond Gill "Pete" Williams Jr. was born February 12, 1935 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to Raymond G. Williams Sr. and Margaret Kirby Williams. He died August 18, 2020 in Casa Grande, Arizona. Pete spent his youth in New Kent, Virginia, most likely on the banks of the Pamunkey River with his father, older sister, Susie, and younger brother, Buzzy, fishing and sometimes catching as he would say. He moved with his family to Tucson, Arizona in 1950 and graduated from Tucson High School in 1954.

Always a lover of the water, Pete served proudly in the U.S. Navy Seabees from 1954-56. Upon his return to Tucson he enrolled at the University of Arizona earning BA in Music Education and a Master's Degree in Music. During this time, he sang opera for the Tucson Opera Company at the Temple of Music and Art and in 1959 auditioned for the San Francisco Opera. While at the UofA, he met Joan McGarty and they were married in 1960. They moved to Coolidge, Arizona in 1963 where they both began teaching careers. Pete was the music teacher and choir director at Coolidge High School. In 1964, to raise money for the music program, he directed the Coolidge High Choir and produced an album of holiday classics. Pete also worked at the Arizona Training Center directing the recreation department, Pinal County Better Housing Department and The Don Mahoney Agency selling real estate.

As a father Pete was very active in his children's lives, coaching Little League baseball, helping on paper routes, building hog and sheep pens and pulling skiers around Canyon Lake for hours every summer. As a lifelong adventurer he would coordinate camping trips to the White Mountains, fishing trips to Mexico and family vacations to California. Pete had a lifetime love of cars and would take his family on desert excursions in his '52 Willy's Jeepster. He never passed up an auto show or a chance to watch a stock car race at 11-Mile Corner. Pete was a very resourceful and imaginative person. He could fix anything and always knew how to solve a problem. On weekend family trips to Tucson he would drive through the Bottle Stop and buy an Orange Crush, Root Beer and a Grape soda. Leaving the caps on, he would pull around the corner and with a 10-penny nail poke a hole in the cap of each and give them to us kids for the drive. It would take about one hour to drink 12 ounces of soda pop through a nail hole, which meant one hour of silence for him and mom with no fighting, no fussing and most importantly no rest stops, genius.

Always known for his beautiful tenor voice, Pete was in constant demand to sing at weddings, funerals and especially Christmas midnight mass at churches around Coolidge. Pete was a long-time member of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, The Coolidge/Florence Elks Lodge, serving as Exalted Ruler and the Coast Guard Auxiliary in Lake Havasu City.

In 1987 Pete married Sylvia Cox. They were married for 33 years until his passing. Sylvia was an outstanding companion and caregiver to Pete. They spent part of the last 30 years in Lake Havasu City, Tempe and finally Casa Grande. Together they were always present at family gatherings and quick with a birthday card or package of baked goods. She kept him on his toes and his three children will always be grateful for her commitment to our father.

Pete Williams is survived by his wife, Sylvia; children, Gill Williams (Sally), Chris Williams (Terri) and Kimberly Bartlett (Brooks); and nine grandchildren, Mitchell, Rex, William, Aiden, Claire, Erica, Danielle, Francesca and AJ; Pete's stepdaughter, Paula King and her children, Kevin, Kyla and Jeremy. He was predeceased by his sister, Susie and brother, Buzz.

Due to current conditions, no service is planned. There will be a family memorial at Thanksgiving and Pete will be interred in the columbarium at St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Coolidge, Arizona.

Rest now, Papa.