



Billy Joe Strain

July 30, 1952 - September 6, 2024

Billy Joe Strain (Bill) was born on July 30, 1952. He was 72 years of age at the time of his death on Friday, September 6, 2024. He passed at home surrounded by his loving wife, children and sister just as he wanted.

Bill was a lifelong nursery man. His career started at the age of 14 when his father took him to work at Strain and Son's Nursery, which was started by his grandfather, Thomas Strain, in the 1930's.

Bill was an active member of the Nurseryman's Association and he traveled extensively with this organization to stay abreast of any plant knowledge or innovation in the nursery business. He also served as president of the Alabama Association. He retired after 45 years.

Bill attended school in Athens and graduated from Athens High School in 1970. He was a football standout and played for Larry McCoy in his high school years. He continued his education and football career at the University of North Alabama on a full-ride athletic scholarship. It was during his playing career at UNA that he met his wife Deborah Rogers who was on the cheerleading squad.

While at UNA, Bill was in the Army ROTC. Upon graduation he was commissioned as Second Lieutenant and served in the Alabama Army

National Guard. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel after 27 years of service.

Bill was always interested in how he could serve his community. He served as a member of the Athens City School Board from 1993 – 2003, he served five years as President. He served as a board member of the Athens Veterans Museum and was an active member of the Athens Rotary Club. In 2018, the Rotary Club awarded him the Martin-Young Lifetime Achievement Award for his service to the community. He was an active member and served on the grounds committee of the Athens First Methodist Church. He followed his father's tradition of greeting all who entered the church doors on Sunday mornings.

He had a passion for clay target shooting and won many Class A tournaments. He loved his time with his hunting buddies over the years.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents Thomas Douglas Strain and Helon Taylor Strain. He is survived by his devoted wife, Deborah Rogers Strain, his children Lauren Elizabeth Strain, Louisa Strain Marks (Brooks), William Gray Strain, Chesley Michael Suttles (Lee) all of Birmingham and Callie Brooks Michael of Atlanta, his grandchildren William Brooks Marks, Jr., Saima Elizabeth Marks. Gray Hasting Marks, Sibyle Elizabeth Suttles, and Edward Lee Suttles III, his sister Betsy Strain Gilbert (Nelson) of Colorado and many loving cousins, nieces and nephews.

We would be remiss to not include one of Bill's favorite activities...his Friday morning coffee group. Thank you, friends Doug Gates, John Bernhardt, Marlon Anderson, Curtis Grissom, John Plunk, Lakin Collins, Morris Lindsey, Doug Chapman, Wayne Wolfe and Jack McDaniels, for helping solve all the world's and Athens City's problems during this Friday morning tradition. Also, many thanks to Anthony England and Jimmy Mcgucken. Most importantly, thank you for your love, support and a lifetime of friendship.

Many thanks for the love and support of all those who visited with Deborah, Bill and his children in his final days.

A memorial service will be held at Athens First Methodist Church, Tuesday, September 10, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. The visitation will be from 12:00 to 1:50 p.m.

In lieu of flowers please make donations to Hospice of Limestone County.

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP **10**. 12:00 PM - 1:50 PM (CT)

Athens First Methodist Church
208 W Hobbs St
Athens, AL 35611

Funeral Service

SEP **10**. 2:00 PM (CT)

Athens First Methodist Church
208 W Hobbs St
Athens, AL 35611

Tribute Wall



“ Bill saved my life once at Florence State le football related heat illness...

witt - September 12, 2024 at 08:45 PM



“ From Louisa's McGriff Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Billy Joe Strain.

From Louisa's McGriff Family - September 09, 2024 at 04:32 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Billy Joe Strain.



September 09, 2024 at 04:32 PM



“ Brandi, Jenee' and Mallie planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Billy Joe Strain.

Brandi, Jenee' and Mallie - September 09, 2024 at 11:08 AM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Billy Joe Strain.*



September 09, 2024 at 11:08 AM



“ *Joel Wiggins, Dave Pratt & Ashley Thomas purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Billy Joe Strain.*



Joel Wiggins, Dave Pratt & Ashley Thomas - September 08, 2024 at 10:08 PM