



William "Bill" Earl Benjamin

June 8, 1953 - April 2, 2026

Bill Benjamin passed away peacefully at his home in Enid, Oklahoma on April 2, 2026, surrounded by family after his fight with Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. Bill was born in Carrollton, Missouri on June 8, 1953 to John Earl and Doris Jean (Bahr) Benjamin. Bill was a 1971 graduate of Carrollton High School.

Growing up in Carrollton, Bill enjoyed duck hunting, swimming at the municipal pool, hiking, watching movies at the Uptown Theater and spending time with his friends. One of his favorite activities was fishing with his father and family. Many days were spent fishing along the banks of Wakenda Creek and various farm ponds in Carroll County.

Bill's interest in the fire service began at an early age. His father was a volunteer for the Carrollton Fire Department, he'd hear the tone alert over the Plectron receiver alerting all firemen to report to the fire station. The excitement and dedication to public service got into his blood. In 1969 as a junior in high school, Bill helped start the Carrollton Junior Fire Department. He spent many hours hanging out with his buddies at the "fire barn" learning the art and science of firefighting. He even skipped school to help fight the Christian Church Fire of January 1971. Bill was hired as a full-time firefighter in 1972 by the Lee's Summit Fire Department, where he eventually served as assistant fire chief. Bill helped wherever was needed and poured himself into work with uncommon commitment. He earned a bachelor's degree in fire

science in 1978 and master's degree in industrial safety in 1981 from the University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg. In 1979, he became an instructor at Johnson County Community College (JCCC) in the Fire Service Program. Here, Bill contributed to the development of countless firefighters and medics. In 2008, Bill retired from JCCC, but retirement didn't last long.

In 2009 he moved to Portland, Oregon and took an instructor job at Portland Community College, where he helped improve the Fire Protection Technology Program. He worked alongside local fire departments and agencies, using his experience and practical knowledge to strengthen training, improve professional development, and help shape the next generation of firefighters and fire service leaders.

Wherever Bill lived or worked he volunteered as a fireman to the local fire department. Over the years, he served with Lee's Summit, Warrensburg, Central Jackson, and Overland Park fire department's. During much of his academic career, he served as an International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) Degree Assembly Member of Accredited Programs and remains an Emeritus Member, a reflection of the national respect he earned through his work and influence. Bill's contribution to the fire service reached across the country through the thousands of students he taught, mentored and challenged. His influence spread throughout the profession and in many ways around the world. The lifesaving procedures, sound judgment, discipline and pride in the craft he instilled in others continues to live on, that kind of legacy does not end with a career and does not end with a lifetime.

Bill and Theresa met in 2012, Theresa was the love of his life. They were united in marriage on April 22, 2016.

Outside of his love for firefighting, Bill enjoyed traveling, drinking a good beer, hunting, fishing and being outdoors. He was a dedicated physical fitness

enthusiast, competing in many 5K races, marathons and IRONMAN competitions. Bill and Theresa traveled to many different places around the world with their friends and family. Some of their favorites were Germany, Ireland, and the St. John Virgin Islands. They also found joy in summer camping trips across Oregon and Washington.

For over 30 years, Bill always looked forward to his annual week-long fishing trip to Canada with his friends. They were lucky to have decades of foolishness together. Adventure, fishing, belly muscle aches from laughter, and solving all the world's problems late at night after too many beers.

He will be lovingly remembered by his wife, Theresa; stepdaughter's Tess (Stephen) Nicholas, Gracie Scott, Isabel Scott; two grandchildren Isla and Scott; sister Carol (Randy) Flick; niece Darcy (Jake) Boorem; nephew, Aaron (Jaime) Flick; his dogs Missy, Rose and Fig (who never left his side); and many friends and extended family.

Bill is preceded in death by his parents.

To sum up Bill's life, he loved firefighting, but even more than that, he loved the people in it. He believed in service, excellence, and the responsibility to leave the profession better than he found it. He did exactly that. He changed lives, strengthened the fire service, and left a mark on this profession that will endure for generations. His legacy lives on in the people he taught, the leaders he shaped, and the many lives that will forever be better because Bill Benjamin was here.

A celebration of life for Bill will be held May 29 at 3:00 PM at the Overland Park Fire Training Center in Overland Park, Kansas. Another celebration of life will be held in Vancouver, Washington on June 27.

A scholarship has been established in Bill's honor at the Portland Community College Foundation. We invite you to donate to the scholarship, which will provide permanent financial support to students studying Fire Protection. Visit www.pcc.edu/give and designate your gift to the "William E. Benjamin Scholarship".

Cremation arrangements are under the direction of Anderson-Burriss Funeral Home and Crematory.

Upcoming Events

Celebration of Life

MAY **29**. 3:00 PM (CT)

Overland Park Fire Training Center
12401 Hemlock St
Overland Park, KS 66213
(913) 895-8400

Tribute Wall



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of William "Bill" Earl Benjamin.



April 20 at 03:43 PM



“ Aireanna Baldwin (Teresa's gym friend) planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of William "Bill" Earl Benjamin.

Aireanna Baldwin (Teresa's gym friend) - April 15 at 10:32 AM



“ Aireanna Baldwin (Teresa's gym friend) purchased the Medium Dish Garden for the family of William "Bill" Earl Benjamin.



Aireanna Baldwin (Teresa's gym friend) - April 15 at 10:32 AM



“ Bill, I appreciate the time working together at PCC. The stories we shared are classic old salt gems. Brother rest in peace. DK

Dennis Katz - April 15 at 10:03 AM