

Bill Don Willard, son of Don Northrip and Ruby Virginia Evans Willard, was born July 29, 1930, near Sleeper, Missouri. He departed this life Monday, May 27, 2002, in St. John's Regional Health Center, in Springfield, Missouri, at the age of seventy-one years, nine months, and twenty-eight days.

On August 15, 1949, he was united in marriage to Louise Irene Potter and to this union seven children were born. He was preceded in death by his parents; and an infant son, Billy Don Willard, Jr.

Bill is survived by his loving wife of fifty-two years, Louise, of the home; two sons, Bradley Willard, and his wife, Sandra, and David Willard, and his wife, Andrea, all of Sleeper, Missouri; four daughters, Candy Harmon, and her husband, Ted, of Lebanon, Missouri, Susan Foster, and her husband, John, of Springfield, Missouri, Kim Amsinger, of Marshfield, Missouri, and Mary Williams, and her husband, Carl, of Lebanon, Missouri; twelve grandchildren, Brennon, Andrea, Blane, Billy, Alicia, and Alexa Willard, Matthew and Amy Harmon, Chris Williams, Amanda Foster, and Nathan and Sarah Amsinger; two brothers, Wayne and Bob Willard, both of Sleeper, Missouri; several nieces and nephews; as well as a host of other relatives and friends.

He was born and raised in the Sleeper community and graduated from Stoutland High School in the Class of 1947. After he and Louise were married, they made their home, near Sleeper, and lovingly raised their family. For a few years, Bill worked on the pipeline in Texas, but soon returned to his Missouri roots. He began working in the excavation business and in 1973, founded Willard Asphalt and Willard Quarries, near Sleeper. Then in 1978, he established Lebanon Ready Mix. Following his interest in racing, he founded the I-44 Speedway near Lebanon in 1982, and the U.S.A. Speedway near Bolivar in 1988.

Bill was a longtime active member of Sleeper United Methodist Church, where he was instrumental in the construction of the new church building.

He belonged to the NASCAR Association and the Missouri Limestone Association, and served on the Board of Directors of Central Bank for the last several years. He enjoyed being outdoors, was an avid birdwatcher, and liked dogs. He loved working on the farm and especially operating a grader. Racing was a major part of his life, and he enjoyed being a part of the action as well as watching. His family was very important to him and he greatly enjoyed his grandchildren.

Bill was a devoted family man, a dedicated and hardworking businessman, and a caring community leader. He will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by all of his family and many, many friends.

A memorial has been established in honor of Mr. Willard for the Sleeper United Methodist Church and donations may be left at the funeral home, 320 S. Adams Avenue, Lebanon, Missouri, 65536.