



## William Furman McClellan Jr.

November 4, 1935 - September 28, 2024

On Saturday, September 28, 2024, William Furman McClellan, Jr. entered heaven to meet his Savior Jesus and join his wife, youngest daughter and so many others he had loved and missed from the Heidelberg area. William is now whole, happy, at home and is probably working on planting a big garden by now.

Born in Heidelberg, Mississippi in 1935 to his parents William F. (Buddy) McClellan, Sr. and Opal Wanetha Stephenson McClellan, William enjoyed growing up around his vast extended family that included McClellans, Stephensons, Browns, Lightseys, Livingstons, and many others. He spent many hours on the big front porch of his Grandma Susie Brown Stephenson's home where his aunts, uncles and cousins gathered on Sunday afternoons under the big oak trees that his grandfather planted for his grandmother. Oddly enough, those trees were rumored to be one of the reasons that Hwy 528 was built with a big curve where it intersects Hwy 503. He graduated from Heidelberg High School where he met his blackhaired beauty high school sweetheart, Edna Rowell and later made her his wife. Theirs was the first wedding in the then newly constructed Philadelphia Community Church parsonage, which was built on land donated by his uncle, Harvey Stephenson.

Although William's life centered around Heidelberg, he did accept a job in New Orleans soon after he earned his B. S. in marketing from the University of

Southern Mississippi, but his adventure in New Orleans with his new bride ended abruptly when he was drafted into the US Army in 1958. After a tour of duty in Greenland, where he experienced sailing near icebergs, he returned to Virginia where he and his wife had their first child, Tammy. Later that year William was honorably discharged from the Army and he brought his small family back to Heidelberg where he found a job working in managing oil transportation for Hess Oil.

In 1962 William and Edna, living in a house Heidelberg, added their youngest daughter Janice to the family. In 1966 they purchased land in the Philadelphia community and soon after moved their family there, a community William always considered home. They lost their beloved baby girl, Janice, in a tragic accident in 1971.

Over the years William added to his responsibilities at Hess managing oil movements across the southeast via pipeline, truck and ship. He was transferred to Hattiesburg for a few years, but returned to his home in the Philadelphia community of Heidelberg as soon as he could.

William was an avid gardener, skilled hunter, motivated family and community historian, and a devout Christian member of Philadelphia Community Church. He had a vast collection of family and community pictures which he was inspired to collect by hearing letters written by his uncles who all were serving in World War II and looking at the pictures they sent back of the amazing things they saw overseas, like big ships, planes, steel bridges and indoor plumbing.

For the last two years of his life, William lived next door to his daughter and son-in-law in St. Francisville. He hated leaving his beloved Heidelberg behind, but he was surrounded by his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The little ones particularly loved visiting Papa as he was lovingly called, because he

kept a supply of toy Hess trucks for them, and always gave them candy.

William was about a month shy of his 89th birthday when he died. He was preceded in death by his loving parents Mr. & Mrs. William F. McClellan, Sr, his wife of 62 years whom he adored and patiently nursed through years of dementia, Edna Rowell McClellan, and his precious, sweet baby girl Janice McClellan who died way too young. He is survived by his brother and sister-in-law, James (Jim) and Carolyn McClellan, daughter and son-in-law Tammy and Ray Laakso; his three grandchildren and their spouses, Sarah and Grant Ollenburger, Paul and Whitney Laakso, and Lauren and Oliver Navo; his adorable and active great-grandchildren, Easton Laakso, Cole Ollenburger, Hudson Ollenburger, Jude Ollenburger, Parker Navo, Isabelle Navo, and yet - to-be-born baby boy Laakso; nieces Lynn Lightsey, and Eve and Kevin Bogan; and nephews Dave and Tonya McClellan, and Doug and Dawn McClellan.

The funeral service for William will be held at Philadelphia Community Church in Heidelberg, Mississippi, the church his great-grandmother Emily McClellan and several of his other ancestors helped found. He will be buried in Philadelphia Cemetery, Heidelberg Mississippi, in a location near the site of the original church where he and his wife were baptized, and among so many of his ancestors and relatives.

Visitation will begin at 10:30 AM on Saturday, October 5 at Philadelphia Community Church in Heidelberg, Mississippi and the funeral service will follow at 11:00 AM.

Pallbearers for the service will be William's nephew Dave McClellan, his grand-nephew Dylan McClellan, his first cousins George Stephenson and Terry Joe Stephenson, his grand-nephew Lewis Lightsey, and his great grand-nephew Justin Lightsey.

In lieu of flowers, please send a card or message with a memory of Papa or make a donation to the Philadelphia Cemetery Fund.

Thank you to all the many people who have supported Papa as he has aged and needed more help, especially his beloved niece and tornado-dodging partner-in-crime Lynn Lightsey and all her family, Eve Bogan, Letitia Risher, Barbara Green, George Stephenson, Sherman Livingston, the Seymore families, the Knight family, Sammy Risher, members of Philadelphia Community Church, all the people who drove Hwy 503 and watched over his home, and so many others who were involved in making his life easier. And thank you to Dr. Tim Lindsey and his staff, and his devoted caregivers China Cummings and Jamekia Williams from Moore Caregivers, who helped make his final days happier.

Dad has gone home. His family knows he is happy. We know he has heard God say "Well done, good and faithful Servant." (from Matt. 25:23). Please join us in celebrating his life.

To sign the online guest book, visit [www.memorychapellaurel.com](http://www.memorychapellaurel.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

OCT 5. 10:30 AM (CT)

Philadelphia Community Church  
3785 MS 528  
Heidelberg, MS 39439

## Service

OCT 5. 11:00 AM (CT)

Philadelphia Community Church  
3785 MS 528  
Heidelberg, MS 39439

# Tribute Wall



“ *My sincere condolences to the McClellans.* ”

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**Dennis Henley** - October 04, 2024 at 07:38 PM