



SAN BENITO, TX. — William Arthur Ray

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William Arthur Ray, age 86, passed away at his winter residence in San Benito on January 15, 2011. Born in Rock Springs, Wyoming on April 7, 1924, Bill was the oldest of his three sisters and a brother who were all raised in Big Piney, Wyoming.

After graduating from high school, he joined the Army in 1943 and was honorably discharged two years later. He returned to his home state and achieved two bachelor engineering degrees (civil and petroleum) from the University of Wyoming in 1950.

Seeking opportunities in the booming aerospace industry, Bill moved to Texas the same year where he got a job, and met and married his wife of 60 years, Mary Lou Moran. After several years and one son, Bill and Mary Lou relocated to San Diego where he worked at Convair and added two more sons to the family. In 1960, Bill accepted a job with Martin Marietta and moved to Denver. Among other projects Bill participated in the design of booster rocket launch systems, astronomical optics systems and the ground launch system for the Skylab space station.

Seeking new challenges, Bill attended graduate business school at nights while working full time and putting two kids through college and obtained his Masters Degree in Business from the University of Colorado in 1973. He changed careers and went to work for the Small Business Administration where he advised many small enterprises on both technical and management issues. He retired at age 64.

Bill loved the outdoors: he went camping, hiking, skiing, and especially fishing with his family whenever he could. He was a meticulous and masterful craftsman and carpenter, building objects from toy chests to mountain cabins by hand.

After retirement, music grew to be his greatest passion. He studied keyboards, banjo, guitar, and ukulele (his favorite!!). And he sang - frequently, fervently and energetically. He joined singing clubs and often participated in music events during his winter residence in south Texas. He spent his last day doing what he loved most - singing and playing ukulele with his friends.

He is preceded in death by his sisters Maicelle and Betty.

Bill is survived by his wife of 60 years, Mary Lou Ray; by his brother Don and his sister Marilyn; by sons William Jr., Charles, and James; by daughter in law Vicki Ray and by grandsons Jordan Ray and Stewart Ray.

His ashes will be placed at Ft. Logan cemetery on January 28 at 10:30 am with a reception at the Ray's residence thereafter.

A memorial and celebration of his life is scheduled at the Fun 'n' Sun resort in San Benito on February 5. In lieu of flowers, please support the Lance Armstrong Foundation at www.livestrong.org/donate. Sign the guestbook at: <http://legacy.com/valleystar/obituaries.asp>