

William Anthony Blair, Sr, age 93, of Camp Jo Jane in Oriental, NC, died Wednesday, January 8, 2020, in New Bern. He loved books and his long, full life could fill several.

Family lore says Bill was so good at baseball he almost went semi-pro. When he broke his arm, he learned to throw well with the other arm. We love the story of Elly's elementary school's 'Parents vs Teachers Softball Game.' When teacher outfielders saw this 50-year-old, slender, medium height dad get up to the plate, they came way in thinking he wouldn't hit the ball far, if at all. A huge hit over their heads was a *fun* home run!

"He and your mom always seemed so happy together. They were a nice balance for each other and very supportive parents."

— *A cousin-in-law from Vermont*

Bill's singing brought a similar surprise. An average sized, skinny man would walk up to the mic and few expected to hear much. His bold amazing voice would startle, then entertain greatly.

Bill was born in London, England, on July 21, 1926, to Marie D'Hollander Blair and Archibald McPhail Blair. He came to the United States in steerage when he was three years old, after a stay in Belgium with his mother's family. He grew up in Bayshore, NY, where his love of boating, fishing, and clamming developed. He graduated high school in 1946, after taking time off to work and keep food on the table! He worked in construction, at a diner, and as a car mechanic before he met his love, Joan G. Worzel, on a blind date. They married on November 11, 1951; lived in Holbrook, New York; then moved to Oakdale, New York, in 1965. Bill worked for more than 30 years at the Long Island Lighting Company as a meter reader, in customer service, and in 'revenue protection' – figuring out how much to charge those who stole electricity.

Bill and Joan had four children: William Jr., Marc, Vivian, and Eleanor. Bill and Joan chaperoned school trips, attended the kids' sporting events and recitals, and helped a great deal with homework.

They kept everyone together though ongoing challenges in health, school, and life. After Bill's retirement around 1990, mom and dad along with William Jr, Marc, and Vivian, all moved to Oriental, NC..

Bill loved to sing and dance. He sang with the Sayville Musical Workshop in New York, and with the

Singer, Dancer, Fisherman, Family Man

Bill Blair embraced life!

By Elly Blair Brosius, Friends, and Family

Pamlico Chorale in the Oriental area. He sang an opera written for him. He sang at weddings and funerals, on a radio show, and for the Pamlico Idols talent show. He also sang in the tub and while washing dishes! He loved opera and Neapolitan songs. He sang on vacations getting standing ovations at talent shows and at restaurants in Italy and in Florida.

He danced at parties, senior groups, and with a dance class – which he and Joan taught – at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Oriental – later taken over by Vivian. It meets Friday mornings at 10 am! He danced at Democrat Governor Perdue's inauguration. He loved ballroom dancing, line dancing, dancing on roller skates, and tap dancing. To keep people moving to music, Bill and Joan founded the line dance group at the 50+ Club near their North Carolina home.

"[Bill] was just SO SPECIAL ... He touched so many people."

— *A neighbor from New York*

Along with his wife Joan, Bill volunteered for many community and political causes. He proudly displayed a 1993 Certificate of Appreciation from NC Governor Hunt for

his volunteer services. Bill and Joan were dedicated to helping family and friends near and far. Being mechanically inclined and willing to put in some study, Bill could repair cars, boat engines, plumbing, decking, and more. He fixed leaky toilets all over the country!

He impressed friends keeping the family cars ticking – doing so well into his 80s. He was faithful to car sellers who could supply him with good used Lincoln Town Cars.

Bill was a master at filleting fish to eat and share, at opening clams and scallops, and at shucking oysters for him and Joan and for groups. He would take time to be with people in need and be with them for making merry. He and Joan took care of three investment homes on Fire Island for his mother-in-law, Eleanor Worzel, and the family made many good memories in Ocean Ridge, NY.

Bill kept a positive attitude though good times and tough times and was generally known for being gentle, grateful, practical, resourceful, active, involved, supportive, funny, health-conscious, and happy.

He loved to travel and he took the family on many trips to see family, friends who'd moved away, the National Parks, and historical sites. His nephews Bill Lang of New Jersey and Guy Worzel of Florida came frequently to visit him and help with

repairs after Bill's stroke in 2012.

In addition to history, Bill loved words and language which helped him sing in Italian, German, and Spanish. He and Joan were both competitive and excellent at Scrabble. Bill loved to read mysteries including Sherlock Holmes – and especially the horse racing related mystery books by Dick Francis.

Bill had special relationships with dogs his whole life. At least two neighbors' dogs and a cat adopted him, visiting him relentlessly until they became his.

Bill loved Joan and her cooking, but he made sure to take her out for birthdays and anniversaries. He loved apricot jelly bread with butter, cake, and Manhattans. He loved to eat seafood and to catch all kinds.

Bill won a big shark tournament in New York and held a long time individual record for heaviest hammerhead shark for a local sportsmen's club. Bill amassed many bowling trophies and once bowled a 279 in a league match. He 'Wii bowled' well into his 90s often getting spares and strikes and offering some clever trash talk to keep all laughing.

"He will always be remembered as one Hell of a Guy! He became my mentor early in life and retained my admiration through out the decades."

— *friend Dick Clifford*

Bill Blair is survived by his son William Blair Jr. of New Bern, and his daughters Vivian Blair of Oriental, NC, and Eleanor Brosius (Thomas) of Centreville, VA. Bill was recently predeceased by his sister Nellie Emanuel, in 2018; his son, Marc Blair, in 2018; and by his wife of 63 years, Joan Blair, in 2014, with whom his ashes will be buried at Union Cemetery on Long Island.

Following Bill and Joan's example, the family extends "heartfelt appreciation to all of the friends, neighbors, caregivers, groups, and organizations that have cared for, and about, us."

A remembrance event with music, shared stories, photos, and food, is planned for Saturday, January 18, from 1-3 pm, by the family and the 50+ Club at the Pamlico County Senior Center, 800 Main St, Alliance, NC. For more information, call his daughters at (252) 249-2608. †

Memorial donations can be made to the Pamlico Chorale, 1410 Seafarer Dr, Oriental NC. 28571 or Pamlico Animal Welfare Society, Box 888, Oriental, NC 28571.



ABOVE: Standing L to R: Marc Blair, William Blair Jr, Mort Emanuel, Bill Blair, Tom Brosius. Seated L to R: Nellie (Blair) Emanuel, Eleanor Blair Brosius, Vivian Blair, Joan Blair. OVAL PHOTO: Bill and Joan were married for 63 years.