



## William "Bill" Burford

June 8, 1929 - September 11, 2020

William E. "Bill" Burford, 91, passed away on Friday, September 11, 2020 at St. Anne Home & Retirement Community, Fort Wayne. Born in Delaware County, Indiana, he was the son of the late William "Ellis" and Mildred Evelyn (Kirklin) Burford. Bill attended the New Haven United Methodist Church, New Haven where he had been involved in various committees and activities. He proudly served his country during the Korean War in the US Navy. Bill was a local piano instructor for 65 years. He attended the St. Louis Institute of Music and was a member of the National Guild of Piano Teachers. He also was a past member of the Masonic Lodge. Bill enjoyed oil painting, tending his flower garden, and telling a joke or two.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Dorothy (Butler) Burford; Children, Laura (Rick) Claypool of New Haven, Kathleen (Lew) Thatcher of Stowe, VT, and Donald (Shannon) Burford of New Haven; 6 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. He was also preceded in death by his siblings, Wynne Burford and Mary Jo Wilson. Funeral service is 2 p.m. Friday, September 18, 2020 at New Haven United Methodist Church, 630 Lincoln Hwy E., New Haven. Pastor Chuck Fenwick. Visitation is 3 to 7 pm Thursday at Harper's Community Funeral Home, 740 State Road 930 East, New Haven. Mask required at both events. Burial with military honors in IOOF Cemetery, New Haven. Please help celebrate Bill's life by wearing bright colors at the service. Preferred memorials to the church. Arrangements to Harper's Community Funeral Home, 740 St. Rd. 930 E., New Haven.

# Cemetery

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**IOOF Cemetery**  
1109 Hartzell Rd.  
New Haven, IN, 46774

# Events

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**SEP 17 Visitation** 03:00PM - 07:00PM  
Harper's Community Funeral Home  
740 State Road 930 E, New Haven, IN, US, 46774

**SEP 18 Funeral Service** 02:00PM  
New Haven United Methodist Church  
630 Lincoln Hwy E, New Haven, IN, US, 46774-1320

# Comments

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“ I'm so sorry to see Bill and Dorothy's passing. I was a their neighbor in the early-mid 1960s and they were all very friendly. Never forgot the "saw sharpening" sign in their front yard. Happy memories from playing with the Burford's up at Muncie Lake so long, long ago.

Rest in peace; you both made the world a happier place!

Don (Thomas) Nieter

**Donald Nieter** - December 01, 2020 at 02:11 PM

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“ Dear Burford Family,

I send you my sincere condolences on Bill's passing. His talent and ability to teach young children and youth was extraordinary. He became and remained a pillar of the musical community in New Haven. His leadership in his church and community will long be remembered and appreciated. My thoughts and prayers will be with you through this time of transition.

Donald I. Snyder

**Donald** - September 18, 2020 at 09:52 PM

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“ I met Mr Burford in 1990 as a student of his piano studio where I saw him once a week for 10 years. He would always ask me near the holidays (any holiday - Valentine’s Day, Easter, Halloween) if I had my tree up and decorated for that holiday. As a kid I would be tickled by this question every time he asked. As an adult I will ask people if they have their tree up for any particular holiday and share this story about my piano teacher.

I also have fond memories of his annual art contest for all the students to vote on their favorite art piece with a blue ribbon placed on the winner’s art work; when Mr and Mrs Burford switched rooms for piano lessons one time; those little classical musician statues (I still have mine), and, piano recital day that we all practiced for each week until the big day - my favorite duet with Mr Burford was a piece from the opera “Carmen”.

I am saddened to hear Mr Burford has passed, but will keep sharing my happy memories and stories of my favorite piano teacher, as well as, keep the good pieces of music out on the piano to always be ready to share the talent he taught me.

My sincere condolences to Mrs Burford and the Burford Family!  
Sincerely,  
Amber (Carr) Kocher

Amber Kocher - September 17, 2020 at 07:15 PM

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“ A painting that he gave to me.  
Wes Gall



Wesley Gall - September 17, 2020 at 06:23 PM

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“ I will always remember him as Mr. Burford. He was my son's teacher, mentor and friend for many years. He showed my son the beauty of the piano as well as the beauty and warmth of his heart. We have a special place in heart for Bill. He touched our lives and left his soul's impression on us. Our hearts and prayers are with Dorothy and the Burford family.

Jim & Karen Gall  
Friend

James & Karen Gall - September 17, 2020 at 05:03 PM

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“ William, or as I knew him, Mr. Burford, was a my piano teacher for 7 years. I considered him a trusted friend and we would often talk about life as much we would talk about music. He had a wonderful sense of humor, at the end of every lesson he would ask what's the password? Of course he hadn't told me or would make up a new one that I would have to remember until the next lesson. To his remaining family, I offer my sincere condolences, he lived a full life that touched the lives of those who knew him and likewise made their lives just as full, he will be greatly missed.

Wesley Gall  
Student

Wesley Gall - September 17, 2020 at 05:01 PM

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“ A great man and a great piano teacher and pianist. He would always greet me with “Well, what do ya know?” He was my mother's piano teacher as well as her siblings'. What a great loss in all of our lives. He will be greatly missed.



Aubrey Dettmer - September 17, 2020 at 12:49 PM

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“ I had Mr. Burford for my piano teacher as a young girl and so did some of my siblings. He was an incredible teacher and would have recitals each year. His wife was also a gifted teacher and they were both amazing when they would play a duet at the recitals. They seemed like a Hollywood dream couple! Later when I was teaching he would come into my classroom each week and volunteer an hour of his time each week to listen to my students read. He always dressed up and wore a special tie, had the best smile and such a great sense of humor. They children looked forward to him coming and enjoyed their reading time with him and the encouraging words he gave them. After they read they usually received a mint. Mr. Burford was such a modest man and I had to beg him to play the piano for the kids and they were in awe! He was also a very talented artist and at various times at my request he also would share some of his beautiful artwork.  
Rest In Peace Mr. Burford! You were a kind, generous, humorous, talented man who made the world a better place! Heaven has gained a real Gem!

Carolyn North - September 16, 2020 at 08:27 PM

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“ My sincere condolences to Mrs. Burford and family during this time. Although not my teacher, I will never forget being greeted by Mr. Burford with a joke and a smile the many years you taught me at Burford Studios. Watching the two of you play duets together was simply magic. The gift of music that you both gave is truly cherished, and I am blessed to have known him.

Susan Lake - September 16, 2020 at 06:29 PM

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“ My sincere condolences to Dorothy & family ! Bill will be missed by all , enjoyed his ties & his quick one-liners ! From one Navy guy to another , Anchors Away !



greg smith - September 15, 2020 at 02:08 PM

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“ Bill always knew how to light up a room. He brightened many days with a simple "Hello Gorgeous" He will be missed. For Dorothy and the family, you are in my prayers.



Jan Gfell - September 15, 2020 at 10:29 AM

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“ Bill is unforgettable. His large personality and quirky sense of humor always drew me, along with his gift of creativity and artistic soul. Bill always struck me as a truly genuine person, and will remain unforgettable.

kim linker - September 15, 2020 at 09:26 AM

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“ Healing Tears - All Pink was purchased for the family of William "Bill" Burford.



September 14, 2020 at 03:26 PM

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“ Our sincerest condolences to Dorothy and family in your loss of a husband, father, friend. You all in our thoughts and prayers. Bill was an amazing funny, crazy friend. Great piano teacher. You will be miss our friend. God bless love, hugs.



Penny doty and family - September 14, 2020 at 04:35 AM



“ Made a donation in honor of Mr. Burford to an art charity.

<https://www.creationsforcures.org/programs/art-kits/>

**Heather Detzner** - September 13, 2020 at 01:42 PM

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“ Dear Mr. Burford. He taught me piano for 12 years, enduring my complete lack of real dedication. I enjoyed piano, but more-so just hanging out with him once a week. I'll always cherish memories of his warm-hearted jokes, his squeaky piano benches, epic ties, his waiting room with endless jigsaw puzzles, and his own paintings hanging on the walls. He taught me to “never apologize for greatness” and “only perfect practice makes perfect.”

**Heather Detzner** - September 13, 2020 at 01:31 PM



“ God bless you “Mr. Burford”! I enjoyed our weekly visits, our concerts and I will continue to remember them every time I see a piano as I always do. Peace be with you and your family Dorothy. We are all so blessed having experienced him in our loves! God bless Bill and God bless all of you.

**ken Yagodinski** - September 14, 2020 at 12:58 PM

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“ This is the picture Bill painted for me of my business. I will cherish it always.



**Gina Talarico** - September 12, 2020 at 07:08 PM

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“ I am so saddened to hear of Bill's passing. I cut his hair for years and he was a pleasure to be around. Always telling jokes, he loved talking about traveling and the many students he taught to play piano. He loved interacting with everyone. It was my honor knowing him and his kind spirit will live on in my heart. My prayers go out to his family. Rest in peace Bill.

God Bless  
Gina Talarico

**Gina Talarico** - September 12, 2020 at 06:05 PM



“ I went to church with Bill. He always made me laugh when I was a kid. He taught my daughter piano for a while. He was a good guy. He will be missed.

**Michelle Biggs** - September 12, 2020 at 06:38 PM



“ I took piano from Bill as part of my retirement plan. I will forever hear him say "play it like you mean it Nancy."

Nancy Gasparini

**Nancy Gasparini** - September 12, 2020 at 08:53 PM



“ So many memories of Bill and his ties! Every Sunday when I was a young adult or a young mother when I would go to church I would see Bill and his Tie and I was instantly happy! He always had something funny to say and he could make church "Fun"!

**LINDA ENGLEHART** - September 14, 2020 at 04:03 PM



“ In 1955, at the age of eight, I felt led to study the piano and still remember the day my mother called Mr. Burford, which resulted in my being accepted as his student for 10 years and then going on to major in music education at Ball State University. I became an elementary music teacher in the public schools, but eventually realized that my passion was teaching one on one with piano students. In fact, when I was 15, Mr. Burford coached me to teach some beginners in his studio. To this day, I still use the mimeograph sheet he provided for teaching the very first piano lesson. I was so blessed and fortunate to have Mr. Burford as my piano teacher, along with the invaluable years of music theory classes, National Guild of Piano Auditions, and numerous recitals.....all of which I have incorporated into my studio for the past 50 years. Because of his excellent instruction (especially in technique), I have been given the opportunity to play in many church worship settings throughout the years as well. The small town of New Haven was blessed to have Mr. Burford....a priceless gem who touched the lives of so many, including this student. My heart-felt prayers are with Dorothy and her family.

**Suzanne Ortlieb Mason** - September 17, 2020 at 06:32 PM