



Merle Richard Craner

March 12, 1930 - October 24, 2023

Merle Richard Craner was born March 12, 1930, in Jarbidge, Nevada to Lyle and Hilda Craner and died October 24, 2023, in Cheney, Washington. Merle went to elementary school in Benewah, Idaho, and finished Jr. and Sr. High School in St. Maries.

After graduating from St. Maries High School in 1948, Merle joined the U.S. Army and was deployed to Japan where he supported the Korean war effort. When his Dad Lyle Craner was killed in a logging accident in the woods around St. Maries, Merle was honorably discharged from the Army and returned to St. Maries to help the family. He eventually enrolled and graduated from the University of Idaho where he earned a degree in education. In 1955, Merle married Barbara Case, also from St. Maries. Throughout their life together, Merle's public-school teaching and administration career took them to many places throughout the Idaho panhandle and eastern Washington, and as far away as Maryland and Singapore. They settled in Cheney, Washington in 1978. After retiring from the public school system and being married for 35 years, Barbara fell ill with cancer and died in 1990. After Barbara's death, Merle kept himself busy by doing handyman work around Cheney. Merle met Joanne Charlton while painting her house in Cheney. They struck up a friendship and were married in late 1991. Merle and Joanne were married for 31 years until Joanne died in 2022.

Music followed Merle his whole life. He learned hymns at an early age, as his mother, Hilda, sang as she worked around the house. In high school, he was the lead in Mert's Melody Masters, playing for school dances and community events in St. Maries, Idaho. He aspired to play the trumpet for the military band and actually traveled by train to Washington D.C. as a teen to try out. He was surprised that they didn't invite him to join. (He couldn't read music but played by ear!) He left a legacy of love . . . love of music and love of God. He brightened every family gathering with a sing-along and prayers. He lived his faith and was an active member in local churches wherever he lived.

Merle was preceded in death by his brothers Jack, Bill, Aamodt, and Fred as well as his older sisters Marie; Barbara Case Craner, and Joanne Boyes Charlton Craner; and his oldest daughter Nancy. He is survived by his sister Petrena Lawson; his children Daniel Craner (Margaret), Edward Craner (Dianna), and Karen Craner; and his stepchildren John Charlton, Brian Charlton, and Gail Benner (Bill). Additionally, he leaves behind 14 grandchildren: David, Bethany, Joy, John, Jim, Emily, Jacob, Nicholas, Nathan, Nicolas, April, Amanda, John Jr., and Allison as well as numerous great-grandchildren.

Burial will be at the Spangle Cemetery on Friday, November 10th at 10:00 A.M. It will be followed by a Memorial Service at the Cheney Church of the Nazarene at 1:00 pm, 338 W. Betz Road, Cheney, WA.

Cemetery Details

Spangle Cemetery

E. Keevy Rd.
Spangle, WA 99031

Previous Events

Burial

NOV 10. 10:00 AM (PT)

Spangle Cemetery
E. Keevy Rd.
Spangle, WA 99031

Memorial Service

NOV 10. 1:00 PM (PT)

Cheney Church of the Nazarene
338 W. Betz Road
Cheney, WA 99004

Tribute Wall

DS

“ Merle was so good to me when my dad passed away in 2009. He prayed for me and shared his thoughts of missing his dad of so many years ago. He was a loving and kind man.
Dennis Smith

Dennis smith - November 10, 2023 at 08:53 AM

KM

“ Merle was my dad's (Bill Morris) best friend growing up and we always called him Uncle Merle , he was a prince of a man and I always enjoyed his playing and singing , he will be missed until we meet again on that glorious shore.Kurt Morris

kurt r morris - November 08, 2023 at 06:57 PM

CC

“ I had the honor of knowing Merle and Joanne for several years while we lived in Cheney. They were wonderful friends and I don't ever think I saw them without a smile. One special memory is Merle inviting me to join his music group that visited the area nursing and retirement homes. Not only did I enjoy those 'gigs' (during which they patiently allowed me to grow in my harmonica abilities) but our time together as we drove back and forth was precious. It was during my time at our church that I received my call into ministry and I found Merle to be a trusted and wise mentor. His final piece of advice to me on the day the church said goodbye to us as we prepared to leave for our first pastorate was, "Only chase one chicken at a time!" That has served me well!

God be with you my friend. "Then when all of life is over and our work on earth is done, and the roll is called up yonder, I'll see you there!"

Chris Clemons -

Chris Clemons - November 07, 2023 at 02:53 PM