



William L. Sorensen

June 5, 2015

William L. Sorensen, 81 years old died in Grants, New Mexico, Friday, June 5th, 2015. Bill was born Sept 18, 1933 in Moroni, Utah to Byron H. and Laverne Gillespie Sorensen. Bill grew up in Mammoth and Eureka, Utah, graduated from Tintic High School in 1951, and entered the Army in 1952. Bill was honorably discharged in 1954 and went to work for Centennial Development Company. In 1963 he was promoted to project superintendent and in 1964 was in charge of special projects in Alaska for Bear Creek Mining Company. He later moved to Grants, New Mexico to work in the uranium mines. Bill being the true entrepreneur that he was left the mining business and in 1969 formed a partnership with Francis W. McCabe and opened LaVentana Steakhouse in Grants, New Mexico. Bill took on many business ventures including a Santa Fe, NM liquor store, a second restaurant in Gallup, NM and IBC Records in Nashville, Tennessee. After the death of his partner Frank McCabe, the partnership transferred to Frank's wife Robin, and continued until he formed a partnership with long-time employee and friend, Stephanie Matkovich. In 2002 they sold LaVentana and in 2006 opened the WOW Diner. Bill was a Grants City Councilman for many years and was a member of the New Mexico Amigos. Bill was instrumental in the formation of the Coyote Del Malpais Golf Course and helped to initiate the beautification of Grants by donating trees to be planted along Main Street (Route 66). Bill was a true gentleman, mentor and friend. He was a very generous person who touched many lives, had many friends and will be greatly missed by all who

worked for him and knew him through the years. Bill is survived by his brother Byron P. Sorensen of Provo, Utah. There will be a Celebration of Bill's Life at LaVentana Steakhouse in Grants, New Mexico, Wednesday, June 10th from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. On Monday, June 15, 2015, at 11:00 am, a Funeral Service will be held at the Brown Mortuary in Santaquin, Utah. Interment will be at the Santaquin City Cemetery immediately following the service. After the graveside service a reception for family and friends will be held at the Cultural Hall in the LDS Church in Eureka, Utah.

Tribute Wall



“ *French Funerals created a Tribute Video in memory of William L. Sorensen*



FRENCH Funerals & Cremations - June 09, 2015 at 12:44 PM

MW

“ Bill was truly part of the McCabe family. Laurie, Zeke, Pat, Jill, Jan and I have known Bill from toddler-hood through adulthood! One of my fondest memories of Bill, is when he'd pick us kids up after school in Eureka and let us drive his truck, on his lap, over to Mammoth. The driving age was younger back then (around 6 or 7 yrs old) in the Bill Sorenson Drivers Ed course)! We loved to visit his horses and when we got older, rode them. When Bill moved to Grants, NM, our family summer vacations, for many years, were in Grants. We loved to visit with Bill and Steph and hang out at LaVentana. For a short time, Bill owned a pizza restaurant in Grants, called Nero's Pizza (named after his Doberman) The most popular item on the menu was "Nero' Pizza" (pizza with everything on it)! One summer, for a couple of weeks, Alice and Eileen Judge, Laurie and I worked at Nero's.....fun memories!

In 1988, Dad died. When I got married in 1990, Bill walked me down the aisle...it meant the world to me. Through the years, our family has kept in touch with Bill, and have made trips (not as often as we would have liked) to Grants, to see him, Steph and Rich; spending most of our time gabbing at the WOW restaurant!

Words can't express how much Bill will be missed. There is so much to miss about him...his outgoing, friendly personality, the way he used to tease,with his pinches and tickling. He also told so many great stories. Bill was well rounded and knew so much about many different things. But, what tops everything is his compassion for others, mainly his community, and he gave his heart and soul to everyone in it! Bill will be forever remembered and loved!

Marcie (McCabe) Walzel

Marcie Walzel - June 19, 2015 at 11:31 AM

JP

“ People like Bill are hard to find... He was kind, caring, loving, and had a good heart. He always tried to look out for people and make sure they were okay. When Bill was around you, you just couldn't help but smile. I am really going to miss him. He was someone truly special in my life. Someone I looked up to from being a little kid until now. He will forever be in my heart. I know not many people are likely to care but i plan to get a tattoo in memory of him. "until we meet again" you will be greatly missed...

Jacky Pearl - June 19, 2015 at 02:22 AM

JC

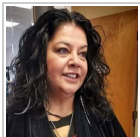
“ Condolences to the family of Bill Sorensen. My first recollection of Bill was when he first opened up La Ventana. My husband (Bill Yeager) and I had the drug store attached to his La Ventana,. I am the one who steamed pressed his hung drapes to help him with his opening,. Bill and I were one of several guests to sample his first meal that he served. One of the best steak dinners I ever had. He was Bill's special friend and was there when he needed him. His dog, Nero was well trained and well liked by my whole family. Sorry to hear of Bill's passing. Jean (Yeager) Cox-Lovell

Jean Cox-Lovell - June 11, 2015 at 06:53 PM

NK

“ I had the honor of working for Bill and Steph at LaVentana. As a bartender you hear some interesting stories. I looked forward to Bill coming to the restaurant every evening and taking a seat at the bar. He always had a story to share. I recall the bet we had over the Atkins diet and the night he sold me his truck. Eleven years later, I still drive it. His smile was infectious and his heart full of love towards everyone he knew. Thank you Bill for all the beautiful memories I will treasure forever.

Nancy Kee - June 11, 2015 at 03:45 AM



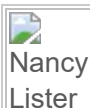
“ Bill and the gentlemen shared a the round table by the bar for decades at La Ventana. You could always find my dad Albert, uncle Jr., Ted Howden, Joe Fidel, etc. The faces changed over the years. On my 18th birthday I stopped by to get cash from my pop. They bought me a glass of Blue Nun and sang happy birthday to me. My friends were driving. Sad to see the gentlemen moving on. Thanks for the memories!

Beverly Michael - June 10, 2015 at 10:50 PM

MF

Bill was always kind and how he could cook! May he be at comfort and peace.

Mark Fidel - June 10, 2015 at 10:54 PM



Nancy Lister

Bill, you will be missed by so many. I so loved sitting and listening to you and my dad talk at La Ventana and share stories and laughter. Before he passed in 2009, my dad shared with me how much he enjoyed those trips to Nashville with you. You were a good friend to him. May you rest in peace surrounded by God's loving arms. We are blessed to have crossed paths with you in this life...Nancy West Lister

Nancy Lister - June 10, 2015 at 11:16 PM

IL

“ All of the San Mateo Lee family feel that we have lost a terrific friend whom we loved dearly. Some of our fondest memories of Bill bring to mind his early and wonderful Iron Blossom Saloon with its beautiful bar. The great parties he caused to happen there. Especially the ones he hosted for New Year's Eve and Halloween. He had real knack of doing the loving thing for not only our family but hosts of others when we were going through the good times or the sad times.. Our prayers are that you, Bill, are ill no longer and that you will somehow know that your friendship towards us gave us great joy.

Iona Lee - June 10, 2015 at 05:24 PM

KF

“ I grew up in Grants, my family moved there in 1958, I remember when Bill opened La Ventana. My father Tom Hart loved steak dinners and he thought that Grants "Had arrived" because we now had a nice restaurant. Bill drove a (in those days) a Datsun 200z and I thought he was so very cool. Many years later, my dad, Tom, was in Grants on a business trip as we had moved to Casper Wyoming. My father found out about my mother;s unexpected death and spent the evening in La Ventana surrounded by his friends while waiting for a a way to return to his kids. I know that he found comfort there. I am sure he is giving Bill a tour of heaven

Kymry Hart

Kymry Hart Fowler - June 10, 2015 at 04:50 PM

RW

“ I became familiar with Bill Sorenson from stopping into the WOW Diner, where I will always remember him sitting at the end of the counter almost everytime I went in. I spoke with Bill just three weeks ago about a property he once owned. The conversation drifted into what happens when we check out of this world. He was a good and decent man and our community will feel his loss. As we spoke, he revealed his Utah roots. Since I lived in Utah for 27 years, not far from where he grew up, we had a very nice conversation. Robert S. Windhorst

Robert Scott Windhorst - June 10, 2015 at 02:25 PM



“ *BILL WAS THE BEST BOSS EVER I WORKED FOR HIM AND STEPH FOR 5 YEARS AT LA VENTANA AND WAS THERE WORKING THE DAY WOW OPEND UP WAS THERE FOR ABOUT 6 MONTHS I BELIVE HIM AND STEPH WERE THE BEST!!!! BILL WAS A GREAT MAN RIP BILL THANK U FOR BEING A PART OF MY LIFE..... JUST ME .BANDI*

Bandi Rhodes - June 10, 2015 at 08:00 AM

PJ

“ *The moment I heard Bill passed away just tore throughy heart. I worked at La Ventana in the late 70's to early 80's. Bill Became a excellent role model for my life and I truly believe I am the man I am today because of the guidance I had by Bill. After moving on we remained good friends. He was a very liberal person, compassionate and always expanded and Cared for his employees. Even though I had not seen him much lately knowing he is gone aches me because this world just lost a diamond. My condolences to all.*

Paul Jaramillo

Paul Jaramillo - June 09, 2015 at 10:28 PM

BJ

“ *Our condolences go out to the Sorensen family and to Stephanie Matkovich. My husband and I worked at the La Ventana in Gallup. We would always stop at WOW diner going back home from Alb. Bill was always a gentlemen . No matter where we saw Bill it was always a hug or too. He will be missed but not forgotten. We love you Bill. Rest in peace my friend.*

Buddy and Mona Jeffries

Buddy & Mona Jeffries - June 09, 2015 at 08:45 PM

JW

“ Although Bill knew me longer than I can remember him since my mom Debi Arlang worked for him when she was a kid until she couldn't work anymore later in life do to disease. The thing that sticks out most to me is the year my mom got to where she could barely walk and had to quit working Bill still continued to pay her until her SSI kicked in. Which probally took a year and a half. He was a very kind and generous man. He will be missed by all.

Jason Workman - June 09, 2015 at 08:04 PM

KL

“ Bill was one of the most amazing men I have ever meet in my life. When I worked at Holiday Inn I would love for him to walk in the door...he always had a story of some adventure he had. When I went to work for him and Stephanie at LaVantana, I always felt so lucky to work with such amazing people. I never remember Bill walking in the door that he did not have a smile on his face. Then one night he threatened to fire me, because I didn't have a college degree....he was always joking. Love you Bill and will miss you.

Karen Lyons - June 09, 2015 at 02:57 PM

DM

“ My condolences go out to the Sorensen family and to Stephanie Matkovich. I worked for them at La Ventana while I was in High School. He was a generous man who gave me my first job. Thank you for all you did for me. Those memories of working there will last a lifetime. May you rest in peace knowing that you had an impact on so many lives.

Dan Montano - June 09, 2015 at 12:16 PM

AM

“ Bill will be missed terribly. He was a wonderful person and one of my best friends. I will never forget all the talks we had about life, family, politics etc. Bill was always there for anyone in need and would do whatever he could to help that person or persons. Bill Sorensen, thank you for being a part of my life. I cherish every memory I have of you. When Joe & I were married in the church you were one of the few invited to share that day with us and there you were. Sitting in the front row with the rest of my family where you belonged. You were not just my friend you were part of my family. My heart aches for you but I know that you are now at peace. We love you Bill....

Alberta & Joe Murrietta - June 09, 2015 at 12:05 PM

CH

“ I am left speechless by his passing -- he will be missed terribly. I can't help but smile when I think of Bill. Having worked for him and Steph for approximately 12 years, I am grateful to have the many memories. There are so many whose lives he touched in some way. Thank you, Bill. Your leaving has left such a huge void in the community, but may your journey home bring you peace.

Cathy Henry - June 09, 2015 at 10:28 AM

MS

“ Prayers for Bill's family and many friends. He was such a gentleman and a great ambassador for Grants and was a true friend to its population. I will always think kindly of him and am happy that our paths crossed.

Mona Sailer - June 09, 2015 at 08:59 AM

DS

“ Bill was in our lives forever it seems. He was there for all our celebrations but most of all Bill was there ALL the time. He was always so supportive and just a true friend. I will never forget when we went to Colorado on a rafting trip with Mark & Jody Olson, got in a bit of trouble to stay the least. Took us hours to be rescued by a Mormon group of students. We had nothing as our rafts etc were all WET as were we!! Bill salvaged whatever food we had and made the BEST meal ever. That is when I found out he only had one lung. Amazingly enough after Mark's raft was destroyed, we were never invited again!! LOL Don't blame him.

Bill, rest in peace you deserve it and you will be missed

Donna Smith - June 08, 2015 at 07:38 PM

SH

“ On behalf of the FRENCH Family of Companies we want to express to you our deepest condolences.

Shelia Hocker - June 08, 2015 at 01:32 PM



Micaela
Galindo

Bill was a wonderful man he helped me in so many ways he helped me with my home work when I was in school stayed late after we shut down the kitchen and he would teach me English I had just came from Mexico he showed me how to cook special plates I just don't have words to explain is sad that we have to tell him now how wonderful man he was I LOVE you my dear friend Bill rest in peace Micaela Galindo and FAMILY

Micaela Galindo - June 09, 2015 at 12:06 PM

DM

Hello Micaela, this is Daniel Montano. We worked for Bill and Steph at La Ventana when we were in High School back in 85. Bill was a good man, and I fondly remember those days.

Dan Montano - June 09, 2015 at 12:12 PM

LM

Bill, I will really miss you, you always made me laugh and appreciate different kinds of music! You also helped me with my shyness and taught me everything about bartending (you always said I was your favorite bartender) lol! Will miss you always! I love you!

Louella metzger - June 09, 2015 at 04:00 PM

TW

Bill was a great guy. I loved eating at his restaurant during my time in Grants. Bill always took the time to say hi and made everyone feel like family. My sincere condolences to his family.

Tom Wong

Tom Wong - June 09, 2015 at 08:23 PM

JM

My thoughts and prayers to Bill's family, his friends, his workers, and Rich and Steph!!! Bill was one of kind and no other will ever be like him. As my friend Debi got sick with MS she would stumble, lose her grip, break glasses, bottles of alcohol and more LOL!! God Bless Her! Bill would say "well there went a day's wages lost" but the laughter was worth it, and as always he would smile never worried about the loss just the laughter and fun!! He always made sure my mom and my sister Nicole were taken care of especially when my mom passed after all her years at LV. There were great times with Bill always made sure you never went hungry and would go the extra walk or call to get what you wanted,. God Bless You !!!! You Will be so missed!! Never forgotten!!! Love you!!

Jackie McKivergan

Jackie McKivergan - June 09, 2015 at 08:51 PM

BH

Thank you Bill for allowing me to work around my college schedule, as Tony & I drove back and forth to Albuquerque to take classes. Patsy and I have remained friends since we worked for you until Tony & I moved to Wyoming where we lived for 21 years. We moved to Wyoming in 1972 as Bill had lined up a job for Tony with Centennial Development, when Kerr McGee went on strike. Patsy would always call me to let me know Bill asked about me and he would ask her to tell me hello.

Thanks Bill, you will be missed. I will keep you in my prayers.
Barbara Ortiz Herrera

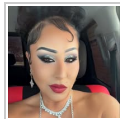
Barbara Herrera - June 09, 2015 at 10:07 PM



My dear friend Bill, you will be missed by many. I learned so much from you and you gave me my first job. I've always looked up to you and always cherish our friendship. You have always been there for me in good and bad times. I always got that smile and special hug from you. May you rest in peace and you will always be in my heart.

Patsy Brito Matthews

Patricia Matthews - June 09, 2015 at 11:03 PM



Bill was a great asset to the cumminity to alot of people. The many lifes he touched, I will miss his dearly so many fond memories of him he will never be forgotten he will alway LIVE in my heart thank you for your many teachings and to Steph im sorry for your loss and to you my dear friend YOU AND BILL were the best bosses ever. And not only Bosses but friends.

Norma Pichardo

Leticia Pichardo - June 13, 2015 at 10:11 AM