



## William "Bill" Sanders

January 30, 1943 - May 24, 2025

William "Bill" Harris Sanders, a beloved father, master craftsman, metal fabricator, and champion racer, passed away peacefully on Saturday, May 24, 2025, surrounded by loved ones. Born on January 30, 1943, in Muskogee, Oklahoma, Bill was the son of John and Reba (Smith) Sanders.

Bill attended public schools in his hometown and graduated from Muskogee Central High School. On November 24, 1961, he married the love of his life, Gay Lynne Eley in Muskogee, Oklahoma. Together they built a life filled with love, laughter, and shared adventures over more than 58 years. Their union was blessed with one son, Brent, who was a great source of pride for Bill and Gay Lynne.

Throughout his life, Bill was a man of many talents and endeavors. He worked as a mechanic, firefighter, welder, pipefitter, and a welding inspector for various inspection companies, a career that took him as far as China. He also worked as a cross-country truck driver, operating his own trucking company. His other business ventures included Sanders Engineering, and S&E Discount Parts, which he operated with his partner, Joel Elrod, his lifelong friend and brother-in-law. His dedication and skills earned him respect and admiration from colleagues and friends alike.

Bill's passions extended beyond his work. He was a talented dirt track and

asphalt track racecar driver. Over the years, he won numerous racing championships and even had the opportunity to race against some of the legends of NASCAR.

Though offered a coveted NASCAR ride, Bill chose to remain true to his roots, continuing to race on dirt tracks. His skill in building race cars was well known and he built race cars for many other drivers.

A faithful member of West Side Church of Christ, Bill's life was grounded in his faith. His kind heart, quick wit, and genuine love for those around him left an indelible mark on everyone he met. He was truly one of a kind, and his presence will be deeply missed.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, John and Reba Sanders, and his beloved wife, Gay Lynne; brothers, Donnie Marcum and John Sanders, Jr.; brother-in-law Dean Elsey and wife Donna; nephews, Michael Elsey and Rodney Shaw; nieces, Cathy Slaton and Selena Courtney; in-laws Harold and Eula Elsey.

He is survived by his son, Brent and wife Sandy; sisters, Johnnie Sue Elrod and husband Joel, JoAnn Cardwell and fiancé, Richard Johnson, and Colleen Havens; sister-in-law, Doris Sanders; grandson, John Kyle Sanders; granddaughter, Marissa Sanders; nephews, Brett Elrod and wife Marisa, Joseph Elrod and wife Candice, Jason Cantwell and wife Michelle; nieces, Andrea Menie, Tammy Epperson, and Hollie Baughman; several great nieces and nephews, along with countless friends and other family members who will hold his memory close to their hearts.

Bill's life will be celebrated at 11AM, Thursday, June 12, 2025 at Cornerstone Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor David Howell officiating. Interment will follow at Memorial Park Cemetery with Brett Elrod, Joseph Elrod, Jason Cantwell, Jimmy Denton, Mike Moschak, and Mike Anderson serving as

pallbearers. Honorary pallbearer will be his son, Brent Sanders.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN 3. 9:00 AM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Cornerstone Funeral Home & Crematory  
1830 North York Street  
Muskogee, OK 74403  
(918) 682-1500

## Celebration of Life

JUN 12. 11:00 AM (CT)

Cornerstone Funeral Home Chapel  
1830 N. York St.  
Muskogee, OK 74403

# Tribute Wall

MI

“ *Knew that man my whole life ...great friend and racing hero . RIP  
Wild Bill #25*

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**Mike** - June 12, 2025 at 04:06 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Life Tributes*



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**Cornerstone Funeral Home and Crematory** - June 09, 2025 at 09:44 AM

JP

“ *As a kid growing up in Muskogee, I loved going to the races at  
Thunderbird Speedway every Friday night and cheering for number  
25. Bill was an inspiration to many kids perhaps without even  
knowing it. He was a classy competitor and had a big impact on this  
young race fan. Godspeed Bill and Rest in Peace.*

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**Jeff Potts** - June 07, 2025 at 02:33 PM



“ 5 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



**Cornerstone Funeral Home and Crematory** - June 05, 2025 at 11:53 AM



“ 106 files added to the album *Life Tributes*



**Cornerstone Funeral Home and Crematory** - June 05, 2025 at 10:18 AM



“ *Greg Rainey lit a candle in memory of William Sanders*



**Greg Rainey** - June 04, 2025 at 04:43 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of William "Bill" Sanders.



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June 04, 2025 at 03:38 PM



“ Bill Sanders was one my favorite drivers at Thunderbird speedway when I was a kid. Some friends and I would visit his shop and he was always friendly. RIP #25 . Charles Kosko

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**Charles Kosko** - June 02, 2025 at 02:11 PM



“ Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of William "Bill" Sanders.



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May 31, 2025 at 04:26 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of William "Bill" Sanders.

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May 31, 2025 at 04:26 PM