



Railsplitter Obituary



William “Bill” E. Spitznagle

17 December 1940 – 26 August 2025

A former Brigade Commander of the 84th Division, COL William (Bill) Spitznagle passed away on August 26th. Please extend your thoughts and prayers to his family. Rest in peace Sir!

William “Bill” E. Spitznagle, 84, of Caledonia, Wisconsin, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family. A devoted husband, proud father and grandfather, decorated military officer, and passionate sportsman, Bill lived a life rooted in service, family, and fairness. Born on December 17, 1940, in Virginia, Minnesota, Bill was raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He attended the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, earning a degree in psychology before launching a dynamic career in both business and military service. Bill proudly served in the United States Army for over 35 years, rising to the rank of Colonel in 1989. His service included both commissioned and enlisted roles, with active foreign duty in Albania, Slovenia, and



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Hungary, and graduation from seven military schools. He received 13 military decorations and badges, including the prestigious Legion of Merit in 2000 – a testament to his leadership and dedication to his country. Professionally, Bill built a successful marketing career with companies such as IBM, Memorex, 3M, and Applied Information Development, consistently earning top sales honors. He also served as an International Elections Monitor, embodying his lifelong belief in democracy and justice. He met the love of his life, Gerry (Abler), while working at IBM – he in marketing, she on the technical side. They married on April 12, 1969, and recently celebrated 55 years of a joyful and supportive marriage. Together, they raised three children and embraced a life full of adventure, laughter, and unwavering love. Bill was a lifelong athlete and avid sports fan. He played nearly every sport growing up, but it was golf that captured his heart – even winning a car in a “Beat the Pro” contest. He rarely missed watching a Packers, Bucks, or Brewers game. Off the course and outside the stadium, Bill found fulfillment in volunteer roles, including President of the Brown Deer Theater, President of the Caledonia Housing Association, and active supporter of the Schroeder Swim Team. He is survived by his beloved wife, Gerry, and their children: Wes (Erin), Dawn Prinsen (Tim), and Bill Jr. (Sabrina). He also had the meaningful opportunity in recent years to meet and build a relationship with his son Craig, who was born prior to his meeting Gerry. Their connection brought him joy, peace, and a sense of wholeness later in life. Bill cherished his grandchildren – Isabella, Olivia, and Holden Spitznagle; Emma, Riley, and Lila Prinsen; Sophie and Will Spitznagle – and was deeply proud of the family they’ve all become. He is also survived by his brother Kerry Spitznagle (Mary), sister Wendy Hilgers (Zach), and many nieces, nephews, extended family, and cherished friends. Bill lived with great principle, firmly grounded in his belief in democracy, fairness, and the rule of law. But more than his titles and accomplishments, he will be remembered for his love of family, his booming laugh, and the values he passed on to generations. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family encourages donations in Bill’s memory to a veteran’s organization or local community cause that reflects his spirit of service.