



# Mr. Willie J. Cernoch

DEC 22, 1924 - JUL 21, 2009



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## **Mr. Willie J. Cernoch**

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**W**illie "Bill" Cernoch, 84, passed away July 21, 2009. Long-time Houston and Channelview resident, he is predeceased by parents John and Katie Cernoch and first wife Florene Helmcamp Cernoch. He is survived by wife Annie Mae Sumbera Cernoch; brothers Erwin and Anna Cernoch of Cape May, NJ, Sidney and Emily Cernoch of La Grange; sister Bernice and Milton Rohan of Edna; uncle Zigmund and Georgie Cernoch of Weimar, sisters-in-law Bea Helmcamp of Weimar, Mary Helmcamp of Houston, Josie and James Brown of Winters; brothers-in-law Bill Reeves and Jim Reeves of Winters and Fred Reeves of Florida; daughter Theresa and husband John Parker; sons William Sumbera and wife Judy, Jim Sumbera and fiance Caroline Mazoch, Dennis Sumbera and fiance Betty Tidwell; former son-in-law Mark Seegers; grandchildren Will Seegers and fiance Jenny Knox, Alec Seegers, Matt and Sam Parker, Jimmy and Daniela Sumbera, Janice and Juan Zarzoza, Tammy Rowe, Curtis Sumbera, Randall Sumbera; great-grandchildren Kirsten Dominy, Alissa, Courtland, Randall, Jr. Sumbera; Rebecca and Samantha Martin; many cousins, nieces and nephews and their families and countless friends. Bill was born in the Czech farming community of Dubina, west of Houston and built a life on honesty, hard work, strong faith and a passion for polka music. After the eighth grade, Bill joined the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression and worked in Wyoming building roads and irrigation canals. Most of his pay helped support family back home. He was a member of the Greatest Generation. A U.S. Army Private with the 38th Cavalry, he was part of the D-Day invasion during World War II in 1944 and later that year earned the Bronze Star for his role in overpowering and capturing an enemy patrol in Germany. Upon returning from the war, Bill made his home in the Houston Heights and became a cement mason, Local Union No. 681. During his 40-year career he helped build many of the city's landmarks, most notably and one he was most proud of-the Astrodome. He was a mentor to young



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men entering the cement mason profession. Upon his retirement several wished him the best and felt they were not only better masons because of him but better people. Bill was a member of the Czech fraternal SPJST Lodge No. 88 and a long-time member of All Saints Catholic Church in the Heights. He then became an active part of the St. Andrew's Parish in Channelview when he married Annie Mae in 1995. He was a third-degree knight in the church's Knights of Columbus Council and introduced parishioners to the joyful worship sounds of a polka Mass. He and Annie Mae were members of Texas Chapter I of the Polka Lover's Klub of America (PoLK of A) serving twice as the group's prince and princess as well as the board of directors and choir. Bill and Annie Mae danced across Texas attending polka and kolache festivals and dances every weekend. They enjoyed representing the Klub in festival parades and out-of-state polka gatherings in Nebraska, Colorado and others. The couple's photograph appeared in the Houston Chronicle on Dec. 28, 2008, accompanying a story on the retirement of the Vrazel's Polka Band. Bill and Annie Mae were also charter members of the Polka Lovers Club Museum of Texas in La Grange. Bill always said polka music is happy music. You just can't feel down when the band begins to play. He was proud of his Czech heritage and wanted to share polka happiness with everyone, constantly inviting friends and strangers alike to dances and recruiting Klub members. To honor his love of music, the music therapy room at The Monarch School's new campus will bear his name, a gift of the Parker family. His family vows to continue his mission to promote happy music. We have no doubt that he is already enjoying polka jam sessions in heaven with some of the greats like Lee Roy Matocha, Bill Mraz and Joe Patek. The family will receive friends from 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Sunday, July 26, 2009 where The Rosary will be recited at 6:00 p.m. A Polka Mass will be held at 10:00 a.m. Monday, July 27 at St. Andrew's Church, 827 Sheldon Rd., Channelview, Texas, 77530 with Rev. Christopher Shackelford, celebrant. Rite of Committal to follow, Woodlawn Cemetery, 1101 Antoine Dr., Houston, Texas 77024. Those serving as pallbearers will be Daniel Cernoch, Richard Cernoch, Dennis Sumbera, Curtis Sumbera, John Parker and Bob Canino. Honorary pallbearers are William Sumbera, Jimmy Sumbera, Harold Lawson and Ron Foley. For those desiring, donations may be made to the Polka



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Lovers Club of Texas Museum, PO Box 72, La Grange, TX 78945 in Bill's honor.  
Please visit [www.sanjacintofunerals.com](http://www.sanjacintofunerals.com) to send words of comfort to the family.



## Tribute Wall

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**San Jacinto Funeral Home & Memorial Park** shared a photo to the **Default Album** album.



September 10 at 12:18 PM



**Kay Carnahan** posted:

My thoughts and prayers are with you all today.

July 27 at 8:48 AM



**Sheryl Taylor** posted:

Cernoch and Sumbera Families, My love and prayers are with you in the loss of Bill. He will be missed by everyone who was fortunate enough to have known him. Sheryl Taylor

July 27 at 5:26 AM



**Rose Mary (Rohan) Aspinwall** posted:

I remember Uncle Bill as always happy. I will miss him. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

July 26 at 6:23 PM



**Joi Lecznar** posted:

Theresa -- thinking of and praying for you and your family. Fondly, Joi

July 26 at 10:14 AM



**Jerry & Joann Fabrygel** posted:

We are sorry to see you leave us. We have known you for a long time. We had a lot of fun teaching dance lessons to you in Houston years ago. We were so happy when you found a partner Annie Mae and both of you were learning more of the dance routines. We will miss seeing you at the many dances you come to and are so friendly. We know you are in a better place, now you are a perfect one. No more pain and suffering. Our thoughts will always be with you. Jerry and Joann Fabrygel P.O.L.K. of A Members and friends

July 26 at 6:34 AM



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**T. Jerry Cashion And Staff Of San Jacinto** posted:

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

July 24 at 7:50 AM



**T. Jerry Cashion And Staff Of San Jacinto** posted:

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

July 24 at 7:48 AM



## Media

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## **Memories only last if you share them**

Join us in honoring Willie by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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