

William Franklin (Bill) Kasson

March 21, 1945 ~ November 26, 2020



Prominent motorcycle racer and shop owner, Bill Kasson died on Thanksgiving in Port Lavaca. He spent many of the last months of his well-lived life in Seadrift on the San Antonio Bay, at his auto garage/apartment.

His skills and passion for the racetrack were balanced by calmer interests in his later years. He bought the garage with his son and a friend some years ago to store their fishing boats and gear. Later, pursuing his gardening interests, Bill planted a citrus orchard and vegetable garden on the property. He would return to Austin after harvest, giving away buckets of sweet potatoes, meyer lemons, oranges, grapefruits, bananas and sugary-sweet tangerines. He'd bring ice chests filled with redfish, flounder and oysters for give-away too.

Born in Midland in 1945, Bill was the eldest of seven children and moved to Austin to attend UT. Parents and siblings followed over the next years. Kasson worked as a heavy equipment operator to help pay tuition while in UT, which is where he met his wife, Brooks. Just before graduation, he bought the Yamaha dealership. The shop specialized in Yamahas and carried various MX brands, as well as Ducatis during the 43 year run.

Bill's passion and his entrepreneurial skills helped popularize motocross racing in Texas. He mentored young riders and promoted the sport with sponsorships and advertising. On race days, Kasson Yamaha's pit setup was always buzzing with activity. Bill raced Yamahas in the expert MX class. He also raced speedway bikes, rode trials, enduros and cross country rides all over the SW as well as in Baja and central Mexico. Several talented racers rose through the ranks with help from Bill.

He and Brooks married in 1969 and raised their two children, Starr and Will, in the motorcycle shop and at the race track. Both kids retain the entrepreneurial and mechanic skills that noisy, greasy upbringing afforded. Bill thoroughly enjoyed being with his grandson, Carter, and was teaching him the mechanical, gardening and fishing skills that he so readily shared with others.

He is survived by his two children, grandson, wife of 51 years and his six brothers and sisters. Stories of his life will survive for generations.

Memorials will be held early summer in Seadrift and in Austin, hopefully at a local MX track.