Willis Owen Cowden

September 9, 1913 ~ January 21, 2016

Willis (Bill) Owen Cowden, 102, passed away January 21, 2016 in the presence of his family. Although his body gave out the last few months, his mind was active and clear, accompanied by his cheerful nature and endless supply of one-liners.

Bill was born in Grand Junction, Colorado on September 9, 1913, where his family homesteaded until they moved to California when he was 10. He lived through the Depression, which affected his outlook for the rest of his life. Bill had numerous jobs as a young man, and while driving a tour bus in West Yellowstone, he met a red-haired waitress, Edith Brown. They married on January 13, 1940. After a brief stay in California, they returned to Salt Lake City. Bill eventually began his life-long career as a police officer with SLPD. He retired as a lieutenant in 1969; then headed security at the Salt Palace for 11 years. While with the SLPD, he created and headed the first formation riding motorcycle squad.

Bill loved gardening and do-it-yourself projects (could have built a house with hangers and duct tape). He was an avid golfer and talented woodworker. Bill was the go-to person for all of his family and was always there to rescue whoever needed help. He was a hands-on grandpa; always attended birthday parties, sporting events, performances, etc. for his grandchildren. His presence in their lives will be sorely missed.

Bill is survived by daughters, Barbara Bissegger and Cheryl Robinson; 5 grandchildren and spouses: 18 great grandchildren and 3 great-great grandsons. He was preceded in death by almost everyone else, including his wife, Edith, parents, 3 sisters and a granddaughter.

Services will be held Saturday, January 30, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. at Larkin Mortuary, 260 E. So. Temple, SLC. Friends may call Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at Larkin Mortuary. Interment will be at Salt Lake City Cemetery.