

William Thomas Gafford
January 9, 1945 – February 26, 2026

William Thomas (Bill) Gafford, age 81, was born in Water Valley, Mississippi to Irma Kate and George Louis Gafford. Bill attended Water Valley schools and enjoyed playing football and running hurdles in track and field.

Bill and Carol Haley, born in the same hospital room a few months apart, began dating in high school when both worked for the school newspaper. Bill earned the Eagle Scout Award and the scouting motto of “Be Prepared” served as a guiding principle in his life.

Bill earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Mississippi, majoring in Mathematics and Sociology. Bill and Carol were married at the Water Valley Methodist Church on June 11, 1967.

His first job with Standard Oil/Amoco took him to New Orleans where he began a 35-year career as a Geophysicist in the Oil and Gas Industry, specializing in deep water oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. Professionally, Bill was active in the Geophysical Society serving as President of the New Orleans Chapter and later the Houston Chapter.

During their 22 years in New Orleans, Bill and Carol welcomed two daughters, Angela and Amy. The family flourished in the unique and diverse culture of the city, and Bill developed a deep appreciation of Jazz music. During Mardi Gras, you could find Bill’s alter ego atop a ladder on St. Charles catching beads. Family vacations always included educational opportunities, reflecting Bill’s love of history. Angela inherited her father’s sense of direction, a love of photography, and commitment to justice. She does not carry on his love of math, choosing words over numbers. Captivated by her Dad’s colored pencils for map work at his office, Amy carries her Dad’s love for art and handicraft and a deep love of the earth and its creatures, especially birds.

A strong man of faith, Bill supported his church through leadership and volunteering during his life. Serving as chair and committee member of the Trustees, Finance Committee and Financial Campaigns, and Staff Parish Relations, Bill’s ability to calmly listen to a variety of differing views and gently

lead people was valued at First UMC New Orleans, Gretna UMC, Cypress UMC and most recently as he supported the new church start Mosaic United Methodist Church in the Cy-Fair area. He continued to serve others on mission trips to Costa Rica and New Mexico. One of his final memories was celebrating communion in the hospital with his associate pastor, a beloved church member, and family by his side.

Creating a workshop in the garage of whatever home he lived in, Bill pursued woodworking, wood turning, building and repairing. A long time volunteer of the Angel House Stained Glass Ministry, churches and homes display his handiwork. He was also accomplished in genealogy, gardening, and birding.

While Bill may have retired from BP, he never actually stopped working. Bill consulted for oil and gas projects for several years, but most of his time and energy was spent as curator of the Museum of Geophysical artifacts in Houston.

Carol and Bill became known as the LolliPops with the birth of their first grandchild. Pop loved supporting and celebrating the interests of his four grandchildren whether it was volunteering, investing, music, rock collections, exploring, 4-H Llama training and shows, or photography.

Bill was a committed community advocate for the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District for over two decades. He volunteered countless hours serving on district wide committees. He served on multiple Bond Study Committees, and was currently serving on the CFISD Long Range Planning Committee.

Bill is survived by his loving wife of almost 59 years Carol, daughters Rev. Angela Gafford Asmus (Joel Asmus) of Fishers, Indiana and Rev. Amy Barron-Gafford (Greg) of Tucson, Arizona, grandchildren Willa Kate and Evan Barron-Gafford, and Isabella and Evelyn Asmus, sister Ann McCullar, brother George (Happy) Gafford, sister-in-law Maybelle (Earl) Rutherford and brother-in-law Sammy (Becky) Haley along with many cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends.

Funeral Services and burial were held in Water Valley, Mississippi on March 7, 2026, with Rev. Angela Gafford Asmus officiating.