



## William Downes

September 7, 1928 - June 17, 2011

William "Bill" C. Downes, 82, of Fort Myers, Florida passed away June 17, 2011.

He was born September 7, 1928 in Newport, Rhode Island the son of John and Mary (Murray) Downes.

He proudly served his country in the United States Army in the Military Police where he was promoted to Corporal. He served with the Newport, Rhode Island Police Department for 31 years and retired as a Lieutenant. During his time with the Newport Police Department, he served as Presidential security with the Secret Service for Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Bush. He received commendations from all 3 presidents. He also directed security for King Hussein of Jordan during his stay. He was Director of Security for America's Cup 12 meter Yacht Races in Rhode Island from 1974 to 1983. He received his B.S. in Criminal Justice from Salve Regina College in Newport, Rhode Island and also attended New England Institute of Law, the University of Rhode Island, and Babson College in Wellesley, MA. He was a drafter and originator of the Police Incentive Bill which was introduced in 1963 and has been in effect since then. This bill enabled police officers to enrich their education and work toward the professionalism of police service. Bill belonged to the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Newport Police Relief Association, Commissioned Police Officers Association of Rhode Island, Veterans of

Foreign Wars, Fraternal Order of Police, Criminalistic Society of Rhode Island, Goat Island Yacht Club, Salve Regina College Alumni Association, Power Squadron, Boating U.S. Association, Knights of Columbus, and Landings Mens Golf Association.

He leaves to cherish his loving memory, his loving wife of 37 years, Maria ? Helgi? Downes, 2 children, Elizabeth Grimes and Timothy P. Downes, and 5 grandchildren.

He was predeceased by his parents as well as his brother John J. Downes.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Friday June 24, 2011 at 11:00 AM at Blessed Pope John XXIII Catholic Church.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in Bill?s loving memory may be made to J. Patrick Boyhan?s Mission, C/O Blessed Pope John XXIII Catholic Church, 13060 Palomino Lane, Fort Myers, Florida 33912.

Funeral arrangements under the direction of Gendron Funeral & Cremation Services Inc., 4224 Cleveland Ave, Suite 1, Fort Myers, Florida 33901, 239-274-0088. Online condolences may be made at [www.gendronfuneralhome.com](http://www.gendronfuneralhome.com).

# Tribute Wall



“ *William Downes*

October 09, 2023 at 02:01 AM



“ *William Downes*

January 28, 2023 at 12:09 PM



“ *Dear Helgi- WE are so sorry for your loss. WE have always enjoyed Bill's company over the years and we remember how proud he was to give us a tour of your beautiful yacht.*

**Ray and Ruth Agnew** - July 25, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ *Dear Helgi, We are very sorry for your loss. Our sincere condolences to you-Willie was a good man.and we have fond memories of him.  
With prayers and sympathy,  
Thea & family,and Marta Murphy*

**Thea Ferris & Familie** - June 25, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DE

“ Dear Helgi, We were so sad to hear of Bill's recent passing. We were just talking about him the other day, wondering how the two of you were doing.

My husband especially has many fond memories of Bill from the days in the Newport Clothing Center and also the years Bill spent on the Newport Police force.

Please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers daily. Denise & Tom

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**Denise** - June 24, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CL

“ Helgi,

You are in our thoughts and prayers. Bill was a really great guy. May the void you now feel be filled with the wonderful memories of a life shared with an exceptional man.

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**Casey Campbell & Irene Louis** - June 24, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ A sympathy card has been sent to a friend or relative of William C. Downes.

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June 22, 2011 at 12:00 AM

BM

“ William Downes

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**Barbara mendillo** - June 22, 2011 at 12:00 AM

RA

“ *Helgi,  
I was saddened to hear the new's of Mr. Downes passing. I enjoyed  
the year's we worked together at the hotel, he was a good friend  
and mentor to me.  
My Sincere Condolences,  
Rhett Allen*

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**Rhett Allen** - June 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

WS

“ *Accept our deepest sympathy. We followed your trying experiences  
on email, forwarded by Debbie Meeks. Walter enjoyed knowing Bill  
and golfing with him.  
God be with you both.*

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**Walter &Cathy Sedlacek** - June 20, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SR

“ *Beth and family,  
Sincerely Mike and I want you to know we are thinking of you at this  
time of loss. God Bless to you and your family. And remember he  
has only gone to the other side...*

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**stephanie rigney** - June 20, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TG

“ *Dear Beth & family,  
So sorry for your loss. May the memories of your time with him  
comfort you during this time.  
Fondly,  
Terry*

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**Terry Homer Gizdavich** - June 20, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CG

“ *Helgi and family:  
My condolences upon the death of "Bill". Today's obituary reminded me of the many good times we had in Newport including sitting on your front and back porch during the parade of ships in Newport way back them.  
Our best to your family.*

*Catherine and Lou Graziano*

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**Catherine Graziano** - June 19, 2011 at 12:00 AM

PL

“ *Helgi:  
We are so sorry to hear about Bill. You and your family are in our thoughts and prayers. We are in NC so we will miss the service.  
Love, Patti and Steve Lane*

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**Patti Lane** - June 19, 2011 at 12:00 AM

VL

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Stan & Van Leedy*

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**Van & Stan Leedy** - June 19, 2011 at 12:00 AM

ES

“ *An angel has been added to heaven! We will always remember Bill and Helgi as the first couple we met at The Landings after moving there in 1993. We have missed them since moving to Texas in 1999. Prayers to Helgi during Bill's transition. Much love, Billie & Ed*

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**Ed & Billie Stapleton** - June 19, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ *A sympathy card has been sent to the family of William C. Downes.*

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June 19, 2011 at 12:00 AM



“ *My condolences to Helgi and the Downes family.*

*Lt. Downes made a great contribution to the NPD and the City of Newport during his time on the force.*

*We missed having him around here when he moved to warmer places.*

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**Rep. Peter Martin** - June 18, 2011 at 12:00 AM

IH

“ Dear Helgi, Elizabeth, Timothy, family members & friends:

*On behalf of the Newport Rhode Island Police Department, the Newport Rhode Island FOP Lodge #8, and the Newport Rhode Island Police Relief Association, representing both Active & Retired Newport Rhode Island Police Officers, please accept our heartfelt sympathy and deepest respect during this time of your great loss.*

*Lieutenant William C. ?Bill? Downes, was a Renowned and Respected member of the Newport Rhode Island Police Department. We are most grateful for his active military duty with the United States Army and his later full thirty-two (32) year police career.*

*Lieutenant William C. ?Bill? Downes beloved his City of Newport and always served with great pride. He accepted nothing less from those officers whom he commanded.*

*Respectfully submitted,  
Inspector. James E. Hazel #14  
President, NPRA*

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**Inspector. James E. Hazel** - June 18, 2011 at 12:00 AM