The Varney family history begins with Thomas William (Bill) Varney, who moved to Frankenmuth in June 1965. Bill was born April 16, 1933 in Huron County to Clifford A. and Anna Rees Varney. Bill was baptized and confirmed at Redman Presbyterian Church. He graduated from Alma College with a bachelor’s degree. Bill married Sue Bryson on September 15, 1956 at First Presbyterian Church in Saginaw, Michigan. Sue died in August 2005.

Bill was a high school teacher for a year (1956-1957), and then began a 27 year salaried position with General Motors. This was followed by nine years computer work with EDS (Electronic Data Systems). Bill was very involved in serving the community of Frankenmuth. He was active in the Lions Club for over 35 years and a member of the City Beautification Committee for over 15 years. Bill worked with the Bavarian Festival Committee for 40 years, assuming the office of president in 1984-1985. Bill has been a member of the United Methodist Church and participates in their many activities.

Bill and Sue had three children:


Bill’s father, Clifford Varney, died in 1973 and his mother, Anna, died in 1971. Clifford and Anna had six children and Bill was the oldest.

Bill’s sister, Doris Ann Varney, was born August 16, 1934. She married Max McKenzie. They had three sons, one daughter and eight grandchildren. Doris and Max lived in Elkton, Michigan.


Catherine Helen Varney was born August 1, 1937. She married Merle Sorenson and they had two daughters and two grandchildren. They resided in Cedarville, Michigan.

James Roderick Varney was born May 15, 1939. “Rod” had a son, three daughters and nine grandchildren. He resided in Caro, Michigan.

Bill’s youngest sister, Carol Mary Jane Varney was born February 13, 1941. She married Alvin McKee and they had two daughters and seven grandchildren. They resided in Cass City, Michigan.

Bill’s grandparents on his father’s side were William and Sarah nee Cowie Varney; and on his mother’s side they were Thomas and Catherine nee Bryce Rees.