



William C. Russell, PSD
Twelfth District Master
1990-1994
(1934-2017)

William "Bill" Clark Russell was born in Tupper Lake, NY to Ralph and Julia Russell- the first son of 11 children. He enlisted in the US Navy at the age of 17 and started his career at Hospital Corps School in Bainbridge, Maryland. He served on a number of bases and ships with notable accomplish- ments in the Arctic and Antarctica aboard the USS Glacier, the world's largest icebreaker at the time, in support of Operation Deep Freeze III-V. During this tour of duty, he wintered over at McMurdo Sound as the senior in charge of medical facilities and even lent a hand in the first appendectomy amid the icebergs of the arctic. He was a member of numerous 'Orders' including, The Order of the Blue Nose, The Domain of the Golden Dragon, The Order of the Red Nose, and The Order of the Emerald Shellback. He served with distinction and was awarded multiple commendations, including the Navy Unit Commendation, the Good Conduct Award (Fifth Award), and multiple Vietnamese Service Medals including a bronze star. After retiring from the Navy, Bill began to work for the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control as a disease investigation supervisor where he managed four rural counties in the Lowcountry of South Carolina, retiring after 26 years.

Bill married Jacqueline "Jackie" Wygant in 1957. They had four children and four grandchildren.

Bill was a communicant of St. Peter's Catholic Church for over 58 years, and a member of the choir for over 30 years. He joined the Knights of Columbus, Michael O'Connor-Council #5026 in Beaufort. As Grand Knight, the council captured more state awards than any other council. He served as a District Deputy and was elected the South Carolina State Deputy in 1985. Bill led the state to National Honors for two consecutive years by meeting and exceeding every Supreme Council goal. Bill was also one of the originators in South Carolina for the Tootsie Roll Drive (Operation Hope).

Bill Russel was a member of the Rev. Albert A. Faase Assembly #1447 of Beaufort and served as the Faithful Navigator. In 1990, he was appointed the twelfth South Carolina 4th Degree District Master and served two terms. He had the honor of leading the fourth degree into the cathedral with regalia for the first time in over 25 years.

Bill was a member of the board of directors of several nonprofit organizations including Thumbs-Up. He served as the chairman of the St. Peter's Family Life Center (school) and church building committees, St. Peter's Parish Council, president of the Holy Name Society, and former Knights of Columbus representative for the Rainbow of Hope Foundation for Clemson University. He was a life member of the Navy League of the United States, a member of the Rotary Club of Beaufort, a two-time recipient of the Paul Harris Fellow award, and member of the glacier society.

HMS William "Bill" C. Russell (USN, Ret.), died September 12, 2020, following a long battle with Parkinson's Disease.