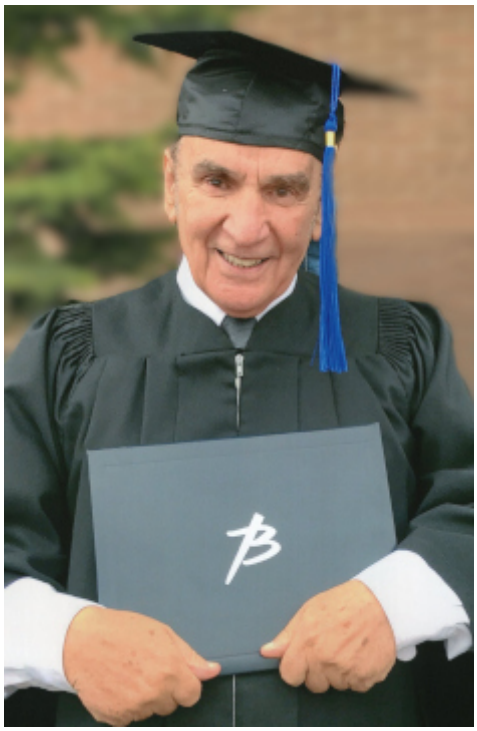
O’Neill, William Patrick

July 22, 2026



William Patrick O’Neill

William Patrick O’Neill was born in St. John, NB on October 10, 1936. Some of his earliest memories were of his hardworking mother who raised over 32 disabled foster children and of his very strong father, also a hardworking longshoreman who loaded and unloaded many ships in the St. John harbor.

He attended St. Vincent Catholic High School and graduated in 1956 from St. John Vocational School. His first post-high school employment was with the Bank of Nova Scotia in St. John. He was offered that position a few days before his high school graduation; the bankers recognized his work ethic and perceptiveness. William worked at that bank for 11 years. During that time, he met and married his wife Jean and together they had five children, all of whom are still successful in their chosen professions. William and his family then travelled and worked extensively; he worked at a bank in Santa Cruz in

California for 2.5 years, serving as a Loans Officer and keeping 16 tellers in order. When the tellers didn't know what to do, the solution was "Ask William".

One Christmas season, his parents were anxious to see William and the grandchildren, so William loaded up the car and drove from California to New Brunswick. Christmas day was actually spent in Washington, DC but the children were told Christmas would be in 3 more days. That worked out okay but neither William nor any of his family went back to his California life and work. The family stayed in New Brunswick. During that time William also got a private pilot's license.

One of William's bank customers told him about a hair salon business he was involved in and encouraged William to take a course in hair styling. This got William's attention and he completed a four-month course in hair styling in Hamilton. He then established a series of three hair salons back in New Brunswick, including a teaching salon. William loved the hair cutting and coloring; he recalls that he was not much into backcombing. The hairstyling business kept him busy for over 10 years and he would have up to 60 students at a time in his government approved styling school.

One day in New Brunswick he walked past a building with a liquidation sign in the window, advertising that everything in the store that went bankrupt was for sale. He bought the entire contents including the furniture for about $4500. That eventually got him involved with National Liquidators, first in New Brunswick and then in Montreal. Next, he moved to Vancouver. One memorable day soon after arriving in BC he skied in the morning and golfed in the afternoon! He said he was a better skier than golfer but enjoyed both. That lifestyle was so enjoyable for him that he stayed for over 5 years, and he continued in the liquidation business. Among other things he attended many auction sales, going several times a week to scoop up bargains. It was during that time that William earned the nickname "Dollar Bill" for frequently bidding a dollar when nobody else wanted to bid on an item. SOLD! He helped the auctioneers and they helped him.

William also owned a 53-foot diesel yacht in Vancouver harbor. He loved boating but he did not like to fish. He recalled how

as a boy, his father made him a fishing rod and the first time he used it he caught an eel. That was so terrifying that he threw the whole thing into the water and walked home empty-handed. His father was not pleased! He never fished again. William had compassion for almost all animals; he would often refer to cats and dogs as “dear”. Two of his favorite animals were Butch and Joy; they were his talking parrots. Butch and William lived together for 26 years and Butch became quite fluent in O’Neill English. Another avid interest was in his ownership and racing of thoroughbred racehorses; he also attended two NFL Superbowl Games.

In the early 2000’s William started attending a Bible teaching church in Vancouver and was eventually baptized. In 2006 and at age 70, William contacted Briercrest Bible College about coming to the prairies and studying Bible and theology. To his surprise he was accepted as a student and moved to Caronport with parrots Butch and Joy. Soon after arrival, he was offered part time work as a groundskeeper and washing institutional vehicles. He was even given a role in the local volunteer fire department and took pride in that position.

William did complete his course of studies and graduated from Briercrest College in 2018 at the age of 81; there is a very nice picture of him proudly holding his graduation diploma. After graduation he continued to live in his mobile home and spent many hours on his front deck reading extensively and watching his beloved Toronto Blue Jays; he travelled every Saturday to Johnstone Auction and loaded his car with newly purchased treasures. William cared for his and the neighbors’ many cats. Spirit was the name of a favorite cat at his home in Caronport, but when Spirit died, Spirit II, an almost identical cat came into his life; indeed, Spirit II was the focus of his life and that beautiful black cat never went hungry!

Thanks to the cats, there were no mice around the O’Neill residence but that was about the only thing you could not find in William’s overflowing back yard. One of his mottos became, “If I don’t have it, then you don’t need it” as he hosted innumerable garage sales. Some of his garage sale revenues went toward two very special trips to Israel; some other income was used to buy anything made of chocolate.

In his later years, his health deteriorated and he eventually moved into Moose Jaw Special Care Home where he spent his last two years and was always thankful for the wonderful people who cared for him until his peaceful passing on Sunday, July 19, 2026, just three months short of his 90th birthday.

A Memorial Service and Celebration of William's life will be held on Saturday, August 22, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at the Golden Age Center in Caronport. Arrangements are entrusted to Moose Jaw Funeral Home, 268 Mulberry Lane. Gary McDowell, Funeral Director 306-693-4550

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ShirleyTillie on July 23, 2026 at 7:26 pm

I did not know William well but he loved the auction mart and coming to my farm to visit all the cats.A very interesting man to spend time talking too.RIP.

Reply