



Francis Leroy Brillhart

January 3, 1935 - May 14, 2026

Francis Leroy Brillhart, age 91, of Holden, Missouri, passed away peacefully surrounded by his loving family on Thursday, May 14, 2026, in Holden, Missouri.

Francis was born on Thursday, January 03, 1935, in Belleville, Kansas, the son of Earl and Blanche (Stewart) Brillhart. He was one of three sons born to the family. At the age of five, Francis moved with his family from Belleville to Grain Valley, Missouri, in 1939, and then to Holden in 1940, where he would spend the remainder of his life building deep roots within the community he loved. He graduated from Holden High School and later married the love of his life, Loretta (Clapper) Brillhart who passed away in February 1990, together they raised three sons, Phillip, Forrest, Darrin Brillhart and one daughter, Cindy (Brillhart) Connell.. After Loretta's passing Francis married Carolyn McQueen and was married several years before her passing.

Francis dedicated 31 years of service to Bendix Corporation before retiring, but retirement never slowed his passion for serving others and remaining active in the Holden community. He was a man whose life was defined by service, generosity, music, and friendship.

Throughout the years, Francis held numerous leadership and volunteer roles within the community. He proudly served as Mayor of Holden for over 11 years and was actively involved with the Whiteman Community Council, the Emergency Management Committee, the Johnson County Community Health Board for 26 years, the Holden Chamber of Commerce, and several local

churches. His dedication and commitment to the people of Holden left a lasting impact that will not soon be forgotten.

In 1960, Francis opened Brillhart Music Store in downtown Holden, a place that became far more than just a business. For more than 66 years, the music store served as a gathering place where friendships were formed, stories were shared, and countless musicians were encouraged. Francis had a remarkable gift for helping others. He donated more than 100 guitars to benefit local causes, gave music lessons to children, repaired instruments and amplifiers, and installed intercom systems in area churches. He especially loved working with his hands and could almost always be found tinkering on a project inside the music store. More than anything, he enjoyed the people who stopped by simply to visit.

Francis will be remembered as a kind-hearted, knowledgeable, and deeply devoted man whose generosity touched countless lives throughout the community.

He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Loretta Brillhart; second wife, Carolyn Brillhart his parents, Earl and Blanche Brillhart; his sons, Phillip, Forrest, and Darrin Brillhart; and his brothers, Russell and Virgil Brillhart; grandson, Charlie Brillhart.

Survivors include his daughter, Cindy Connell and husband Jim of Holden, Missouri, sister in-laws Kathy Brillhart wife of Forrest, Karen Parks wife of Phillip and Julie Brillhart wife of Darrin; grandchildren Robert Brillhart, Theresa Knox, Chris Connell and wife Amy, Jacob Brillhart, McKenzie Tyson and husband Dylan, and Frank Brillhart; great grandchildren Payton Turner and husband Cameron; Tristen Connell, Addie Brillhart, Coulson Turner, Javon Knox, Delaney Tyson along with many extended family members, dear friends, and members of the community who will greatly miss him.

A visitation and memorial service will be held on Saturday, May 30, 2026, at Holden United Methodist Church, 605 E. 10th Street, Holden, Missouri.

Visitation will be from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., with the memorial service immediately following at the church.

The family suggests memorial contributions be made to the Holden Schools Music Program in memory of Francis Brillhart.

Arrangements are under the care of Campbell-Cast Funeral Home, a Stewart Family Company. Online condolences may be shared at www.castfuneralhome.com.

Upcoming Events

Visitation

MAY 30. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Holden United Methodist Church
605 E. 10th Street
Holden, MO 64040

Memorial Service

MAY 30. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Holden United Methodist Church
605 E. 10th Street
Holden, MO 64040

Interment

MAY 30. 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM (CT)

Holden Cemetery
West 10th Street
Holden, MO 64040