



William Edward Whalen

February 8, 1938 - May 8, 2020

Dateline: Godfrey

William Edward Whalen, 82, died on May 8, 2020 in Godfrey, IL. Born February 8, 1938 in Alton, he was the son of Peter and Mary (Baker) Whalen. Bill attended St. Ambrose Catholic School and Marquette High School, where he was known for his athletic talent in baseball and football, and for his skill as an artist, which led him to a B.F.A. in Painting from Washington University in 1961. Following service in the U.S. Army, Bill moved to New York to pursue a career as an artist. In 1971, he moved to Plainfield, Vermont, where he devoted himself to a life of painting and living close to nature, while showing his artwork in galleries in New England and California. In 2006, following his marriage to Jeanne (Lemieux), his adored partner in all things, Bill returned to Godfrey. Bill loved living, and outside of artwork, he expressed his boundless creative energy through a wide range of interests, including hiking, gardening, cycling, philosophy, Nordic skiing, and music. His mother Mary was an accomplished pianist and organist; early exposure to her performances instilled a life-long love of classical and baroque music in Bill. He was also a careful reader of H.D. Thoreau, and posted a handcrafted sign in his home in tribute to this passage from Walden: "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." Bill's family knows he is hearing this music even now. Bill is survived by his cherished and caring wife, Jeanne, of Godfrey, who was by his side in his last days. He is also survived by his son Benji (Kate), grandsons Oscar William and Harry Patrick; stepson Neil Morrissette; stepdaughter Mary Lisa (Morrissette) Caswell; nieces Anne (Whalen) O'Connell, and Susan; nephews Thomas, Matthew, Joseph and Daniel; the mother of his son, Benjamin, Maggie (Stafford) Whalen. Bill loved all of his family members deeply. He was preceded in death by his father and mother, his brother James, and his sister Helen. Private services will be held at Gent Funeral Home in Alton. Father Steve Janoski will officiate. Burial will be at St. Patrick's Cemetery in Godfrey. Memorials may be made to the Alzheimer's Association. Online guestbook and information may be found at www.gentfuneralhome.com

Comments



“ Very sorry for your loss.
Liz Parker, [Cousin]
Godfrey

Liz Parker - May 17, 2020 at 10:59 PM



“ Dad painting on the Mississippi, Ellis Island, Alton, 2018



Benji - May 16, 2020 at 09:50 PM



“ I met Bill in NYC's East Village in 1967. One of my favorite pieces of Bill's art was a hollow egg he had painted of the Grand Canal in Venice. He had suspended it from the ceiling on a string so it spun around slowly. He showed me how to view it through my fist hand to give the feeling of riding in a gondola. He captured the essence of so many beautiful places in his paintings. Though it took me until 2016 to get there, his painted egg is what put Venice on my bucket list.

Maggie Whalen
Stoneham, MA



Maggie Whalen - May 13, 2020 at 04:51 PM



“ My condolences to Bill’s family on the sad news of his death. Bill had been a dear friend of mine in our college days and in the early ‘60s when we both went to New York City as aspiring painters. Regrettably our life choices and career paths diverged by the end of the decade as I left the city and he thereafter. But memories of good times and shared experiences do overcome the passage of time.

Dominic Ricciotti
Winona, MN



Dominic Ricciotti - May 13, 2020 at 10:48 AM



“ Winter view across Winooski River, E. Montpelier, VT. by Bill



Kate Sweetman - May 12, 2020 at 02:58 PM



“ Hay bales (Vermont), oil on canvas, by Bill.



Kate Sweetman - May 12, 2020 at 02:50 PM



“ Dear Grampa,
I'll miss you but will always have these memories. I remember how we would go for walks in the forest that were always pretty. They were colorful and happy experiences. We would walk along the beach and it was fun looking at all the rocks and stuff that had washed up. I remember the paintings you made. They are nice and the style feels right. I remember playing baseball and football in the backyard. It was fun and exciting to run around the yard. I am lucky to have you as a grampa.

Love,
Harry

Kate Sweetman - May 12, 2020 at 02:35 PM



“ Grampa

Grampa enjoyed going on long walks in the woods.

On the trail, Grampa would sing his favorite songs, like “Old Man River.”

Grampa was always ready to talk about art.

Grampa loved to discuss why he made art, what art meant to him, and what art meant to others.

Grampa spoke of Nature's beauty, how it inspired him and gave him awe.

I will miss the walks, songs and talks, but I will always have these memories.

Love,
Oscar

Kate Sweetman - May 12, 2020 at 02:33 PM



“ IBR & Vince's Team purchased the Share the Health for the family of William Edward Whalen.



IBR & Vince's Team - May 12, 2020 at 01:15 PM



“ Bill & Benji - 1974



Dereck - May 12, 2020 at 11:45 AM



“ 7 files added to the album Bill and family



Kate Sweetman - May 12, 2020 at 11:17 AM



“ Madelyn Gawaran lit a candle in memory of William Edward Whalen



madelyn gawaran - May 11, 2020 at 08:05 PM



“ Some self portraits, a newspaper clipping photo of Bill, and a painting of his son Benji as a toddler.



Dereck Cate - May 10, 2020 at 11:18 AM



“ Sending our love to Benji, Kate, Oscar and Harry. We hope the many wonderful memories you have of Bill are a comfort during this very difficult time. Please accept our heartfelt condolences.



The Dowling Family - May 09, 2020 at 11:32 PM



“ From the Dowling family

The Dowling Family - May 09, 2020 at 11:33 PM



“ Sue lit a candle in memory of William Edward Whalen



Sue - May 09, 2020 at 03:34 PM