



Mr. William James Ballantyne

October 3, 2012

Bill Ballantyne, playwright and teacher, died on October 3, 2012 in Toronto of lung cancer. He was 67 years of age. A remembrance gathering will be held on Thursday, October 11th from 5 - 8 p.m. at 35 Jackman Ave., Toronto.

Previous Events

Memorial Gathering

OCT 11. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Residence
35 Jackman Avenue
Toronto, ON (CA)

Tribute Wall

SG

“ *Memories of Bill as a student at Bishop's University and special condolences to his sister, Marion, whom I knew many years ago.*
Susan McCubbin Guest

Susan McCubbin Guest - October 16, 2012 at 10:28 AM

CF

“ *He read and performed Shakespeare at Stratford. He listened, played and appreciated jazz more than anyone I know. He was a political junkie who could predict the future of American politics!!?. He was a writer of all things; a commentator of the human condition. He understood people from all classes. He loved to laugh and make people think. He was not afraid to shake things up, to open dialogue to stir emotion while remaining neutral in his own front. He loved to flirt with women. He loved cats. He drank beer then milk. Ate chocolate. And knew when he was fucked! He never once felt sorry for himself or offered any regrets. He was cool! Probably the coolest person I knew. He didn't care about material goods but could appreciate a fine headphone or a warm sweater if it came from the "right" place. He loved Spain and had an admiration for BMW automobiles with ashtrays. He didn't need an audience to feel appreciated, he knew in his heart that what he did was good. The plays, the poetry, the stories, the music. That is how he should be remembered. Larger than life, beyond words. But to me he will remain my uncle, mentor, teacher and friend.*

Billy Boy, I'll miss you.

Casey Fleming - October 11, 2012 at 03:39 PM



“ *Nora Brett lit a candle in memory of Mr. William James Ballantyne*



Nora Brett - October 11, 2012 at 01:42 PM

SB

“ *Bill was our neighbour. And I knew he was a writer before I learned he was a writer because he noticed things that other people didn't. Bill was someone I saw mostly in passing, but the difference - and why I will miss him - was that he didn't just pass, he stopped. He always shared a thought or a laugh or an exclamation. And he always gave my young daughter a warm greeting and told us a thing or two about jazz along the way. One day he even showed up at our house with a gift for her: a red electronic keyboard - a real instrument, not just a toy - that she has played practically every day of her life since. And danced in various tutus to. And sung to. And in this delightful way, we will remember him for a long time to come, which - from what I'm reading here - sounds like the way he would've liked it. With fondness and condolences, Suzanne Bolch*

Suzanne Bolch - October 09, 2012 at 12:03 PM

PS

“ I send condolences to all of us who love Bill.
I had the honor to compose incidental music for a production of *Bat Masterson's Last Regular Job*, directed by Charlie Siegel.
Little did I know back then, that I would never again work with a writer I respected more or found funnier.

On August 13th, when I wrote Bill that I knew he was ill, he sent me a poem.

Thanks Bill.
Here is the poem for all of you to see.

*Buffalo Bill's
defunct
who used to
ride a watersmooth-silver
stallion
And break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat
Jesus
he was a handsome man
and what I want to know is
how do you like your blueeyed boy
Mister Death*



Patricia Lee Stotter - October 08, 2012 at 04:25 PM

MB

*Thank you so much for sharing your memory and the poem, Patricia. It's BILL at his best; brilliant.
Marcia Bennett (actress in Bat Masterson's Last Regular Job)*

Marcia Bennett - October 11, 2012 at 07:44 AM

AS

“ 2 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Aaron Schwartz - October 07, 2012 at 04:11 PM

AS

“ *I first met Bill when I directed him in a play at the Red Barn Theatre long ago. He was great in the part, and a handful to deal with as a director because he knew what worked and why and would not be bullied or cajoled. We became close friends and when he started writing plays, I had the pleasure of directing and producing two of his Toronto premieres. Our friendship continued to the end, and I am better for it. I will miss him, as will his other friends, I know, because there is no one like him.*

Bill was one of Canada's most brilliant playwrights, a skilled and talented actor and a respected teacher. But at heart, he was a musician. His understanding and love of music informed his teaching, elevated his acting and defined his writing. His writing is pure, disciplined, and compelling: it is insightful, entertaining, hilarious, challenging and compelling. He wrote jazz. Hope there's a grand piano up there just for you, Bill. And a stage.

Aaron Schwartz - October 07, 2012 at 03:51 PM

MI

“ Bill was a fun person, loved to joke, push the rules, etc. but he was also a very helpful tutor in our courses at Ryerson. It was a pleasure to know him and I am really sorry to hear the news about his death. The last time I saw Bill was at our "Pub" afternoon about a year ago now. He was his usual self, fun, cheeky and a terrible flirt, although a little quieter than usual. We were all so fond of him. I wish I could be at the remembrance gathering on October 11th but unfortunately I cannot. Good wishes Bill wherever you are now!!

Maureen Delaney

Maureen Delaney (Act II) - October 07, 2012 at 03:50 PM

DF

“ I never knew Bill all that well. He was a friend of the late Arlene Zock, an all around great vocalist here in Toronto (sang with my band Whiskey Jack). However, my sense was, Bill was a rogue and I admired and somewhat envied his daring. He attended my first "toy drive" in my home many years ago and his toy donation was the politically incorrect toy gun. It got a lot of laughs from those with a wry sense of humour. That also inspired me to attend his Tim Hardin tribute play on Brunswick Ave. shortly thereafter. My guess is, there was a lot of Bill in Tim Hardin and a lot of Tim Hardin in Bill. Too bad he wasn't able to smoke during the play... in his mind he said it would have added to the drama and I'm sure he was right.

Duncan Fremlin - October 06, 2012 at 10:44 AM

RB

“ Bill Ballantyne and I spoke by phone for the first time in May of 2008 ; he returned my call concerning his writing course . This conversation led to some Montreal memories as I am slightly younger but sport was an attraction ,for Bill it was the Canadiens as they were for me including the Alouettes and for certain my apprenticeship there . Bill left Montreal for Toronto during the lanquage era and spared little venom with me . Montreal was a place which now falls into perspective having close encounters with sport teams and the CBC . My project was to integrate sport memories and great events in a book for which I wanted his input . Coaching , direction and his course . We began this but it seems Bill became ill before the course could begun . The \$200 for opinion and coaching was well spent . He had completed a play and it was ready for production and showing when we last spoke . Other writing ideas sent along were treated with direction at \$50 a pop . Thanks Bill , we didn't meet or share a coffee when I was in Toronto including last September . My phone conversations were hindered but I am tough enough to handle that . For Bill ; Red Fisher and I exchanged details of great moments and the Editors acknowledged my insight to the 72 Summit . Condolences to all ! Ron Bates
Ottawa

Ron Bates - October 06, 2012 at 09:51 AM

IH

“ Bill was a friend from student days at Bishop's University in the 1960s, with whom I became reconnected a few years ago thanks to the internet. I recall his love for acting and the theatre, and our shared interest in music. His was a generous spirit, and I am saddened by his passing. I extend my sincere condolences to his family, Ian Hammond (Ottawa)

Ian Hammond - October 06, 2012 at 09:28 AM

DO

Bill was a splendid "learn by doing" educator. His ironically gruff manner made class banter meaningful and funny. I took every course at Ryerson that he taught, his workshops as well.

I invoked his name only yesterday, the 5th of October, as the voice of "Less is more" in a playwriting class. His economy of word and direction were/are an ideal to work by.

My sense of Bill was that he lived very much in the moment, a choice that left no room for self pity or sentimentality.

My condolences to his family, Dick O'Connor

Dick O'Connor - October 06, 2012 at 06:12 PM

BW

Bill and I first met at Bishop's University, our mutual love of jazz was the common bond. I soon learned how fortunate I was to have met Bill, he was bright, witty and a true and generous friend. Bill and I lost contact in 1976, he was in Toronto and I had gotten married and drifted down to Texas. Contact was restored about eight months ago by way of the internet and it was then that I became aware of Bill's deteriorating health. We kept up correspondence, writing and responding three to four times a week and what came out of those exchanges was Bill's clarity, bravery and lack of self pity in dealing with his very bad hand. It summed up the man. Goodbye good friend.

Bob Walter - October 10, 2012 at 09:35 AM

CZ

One of the highlights of my learning curve was the afternoon Bill devoted to 'A Streetcar Named Desire' for ACT II STUDIO. Bill was a terrific facilitator and his knowledge took my breath away. I have spoken with Bill a number of times and he was always in such good spirits and, as always, funny as hell. Bill is a real loss for ACT II STUDIO and all who studied with him.

Carole Zaza - October 11, 2012 at 10:07 AM