



William Lawrence Sansom

August 13, 1946 - July 4, 2019

The family of William Sansom request for donations to be made in his honor in lieu of flowers.

William Lawrence Sansom, 72, of Lake Ronkonkoma, formerly of Huntington, Long Island died on July 4th, 2019. Mr. Sansom, or Bill to his friends, was born in Atlantic City, NJ to Mildred Nash Sansom, opera student, and William Morrison Sansom, son of a newspaper family and journalism grad who broke career ranks to become a pilot for Pan American Airways. He is a descendent of Governor William Bradford of Plymouth, Massachusetts as well as James Nash, a Massachusetts soldier in the revolutionary war.

From the very beginning, Bill had music, flight and language in his life. Bill's early years were spent in Rio De Janiero where Pan Am transferred his father to fly their routes. By 1950, Bill's small reign over his family had been upended by the arrival of his two siblings, brother Bob and sister Carol. The family had returned to the US and settled in Huntington Station. When Bill's parents took a big chance and paid \$2000 to join a group of airline personnel and move to a place called Fiddler's Green in Lloyd Neck, they provided Bill with a platform for all the adventures a kid could ever want growing up. He built and flew model airplanes, developed his music, photography and love of Long Island. Bill learned to sail on a Lightning and later crewed on racing boats off Block Island. Bill joined Old First Presbyterian Church and attended Cold Spring Harbor High School where he excelled in sports and drama, started a band

and played for school dances. He rebuilt an old Jaguar and continued his writing, his pieces appearing in the school's creative publications.

Bill served in the Marine Corps in the Vietnam War, returning home with an AK-47 wound to his leg, earning a Purple Heart. During his full recovery, Bill resumed his music, writing and photography while completing his college education at C. W. Post College. He later composed and performed the music for his sister's wedding. He went to work for an advertising agency, writing jingles for commercials. Later, Bill's guitar skills earned him numerous awards from the Veteran's Administration National Creative Arts Competition, including for Original Composition.

Bill's love of design, flight and fancy were happily married in the creation of a remote controlled blimp that he and friend Bill Dotson designed, developed and flew in the Guggenheim Museum. He created and installed lighting elements for night club environments while working for the Starfire Company. His work could be seen in the St Francis Hotel in San Francisco and the Visage Club in Manhattan.

When Bill's leg wound suddenly resurfaced in 2015, he handled a year in a wheelchair following the required surgeries by using photography to express his new perspective. He explored any new field or phenomenon that took his interest, wrapping it into his emails or posing questions to his friends and his growing email list. Thus, we learned about cathedrals and colliders and debated the flight of birds. Bill had an extraordinary gift for creating imagery through language. He had a great interest in life, knowledge, history and the value of perspective. He looked for connections of ideas and events that otherwise seemed unrelated. He sought ways to express these thoughts through his writings and by sharing them he made us stop and think, and frequently to engage. Although Bill had tremendous resilience, he needed a partner, a defender, and he finally found one in Francee, his loving partner for his last few years. This was a blessing indeed. Together, they attacked Bill's many health challenges to come, and shared new adventures including long road trips to friends and family.

Surviving Bill is his sister Carol and her husband Jim, Aunt Eva Nash, cousins Bill Nash, Mark Nash, Maria Alley and Juanita Akers. Preceding him in death is his brother Robert, his Mother Mildred and Father William M. The graveside service will be in Huntington Rural Cemetery on Monday, July 15, 2019 at 2pm.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the following organizations are requested.

American Lung Association <https://action.lung.org/site/Donation>, Wounded Warrior Project www.support.woundedwarriorproject.org., North Shore Animal League America www.animalleague.org

Cemetery Details

Huntington Rural Cemetery

555 New York Avenue
Huntington, NY 11743

Previous Events

Graveside Service

JUL 15. 2:00 PM (ET)

Huntington Rural Cemetery
555 New York Avenue
Huntington, NY 11743

Tribute Wall



“ *I'm 80 now and just returning to the guitar. I still have the Sam Ash music notebook where Bill scratched out tab for Blackbird, charts for Travis picking, Sweet Substitute. I'm so sorry he's passed on. He is still very much alive in my life. Forever grateful.*

Mary Stahl - August 15, 2024 at 10:27 PM



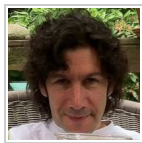
“ *William Lawrence Sansom*

November 27, 2022 at 05:33 PM



“ *Bill was the older brother I never had. We met in the early '90's and immediately became guitar buddies. Bill and I would play at Caliban's on Sunday evenings and imbibe a pint or two. Bill was forever curious and in need of learning and experimenting. His curiosity was infectious and a dry wit that crushed it. I'm forever grateful for our friendship and will hold you dear in my heart. Your friend, Dan*

Dan Sokol - December 08, 2019 at 05:06 PM



“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Roger O'witz - September 06, 2019 at 04:10 PM



“ *Bill was full of energy and creativity. He was an original thinker, a gifted musician, and a kind and playful person who was unique and special. A magical memory I have of him is walking together on the beach at Lloyd Neck in a dense fog when suddenly a woman on a white horse emerged, rode passed without seeing us, and disappeared into the fog again like an dream. Another was on a night sail looking at the stars in the dark sky above and the bioluminescent algae glowing in the sea below. - Joyce Crain*

Roger O'witz - September 06, 2019 at 04:09 PM

RB

“ *Tonight's fire is for William L. Sansom, the most inspired and inspiring artist I have ever had the good fortune of knowing. Bill was a creative genius with a chaotic mind and a kind heart. We worked together years ago, Crow and I, first meeting at my father's fiber optic shop, which Bill was curious about. I learned many things from this man - about art and design, cocaine and adventure, but most of all about the boundlessness of creativity and passion. How surrendering yourself to the muse is the only true path for an artist. He is one of those voices in my head heart and soul, barely perceptible but deeply and unwaveringly powerful , goading me to do my best work, and do justice to the muse. Tonight I honor and thank you for sharing your gift with me, Bill. Until we meet again.*

ROGER BERKOWITZ - August 19, 2019 at 09:29 PM

“ Reminisces By Lindsay Schieffelin Part 2

Body in hand, we scrounged for a VW carcass for the chassis and running gear. Lugging it all to Calamus was a feat in itself. And because we wanted the hottest dune buggy on the East coast, we discarded the stock VW Beetle motor for the larger, more powerful version that powered the VW Vanagon. Then the process of dismembering the VW carcass started. It was FAR more complicated than we ever imagined. The wiring was complex, gauges were difficult, but worst of all was coupling that big motor to that little chassis.

Bill and I were constantly after the two mechanics for help. What started for them as an amusing effort to occasionally help two idiotic young men, rapidly became an all-too-frequent pain-in-the-ass! And we had made one colossal miscalculation. The engine in the VW chassis literally hangs off the rear of the chassis. So front-to-rear balance is somewhat of an issue. The larger engine was to make that balance significantly worse.

At this point Christina and I had gotten engaged, so I had abandoned Bill to finish the dune buggy while I went and got a real job. Bill later admitted that, on the maiden voyage of the dune buggy, it would not only do wheelies, but did so with even the gentlest prod of the throttle. While it looked and sounded stunning, it was undriveable!

I was working in New York City for a large industrial company in sales/service, so I rented an apartment there. Only weekends were available for trips to Long Island. Christina and I got married in February of 1972 at her home on West Neck Road in Lloyd Harbor. We had a “society-type” band, but later in the afternoon, Bill performed with his electric guitar. That fall, Christina and I left for Boston and business school.

While our visits with Bill were limited in the intervening years, we will

always remember him as the happy-go-lucky Gyro Gearloose. His enthusiasm for everything around him was irrepressible. He could imagine and create things that were amazing, even though they didn't always work as hoped. He had a boyish shyness about him, and a heart of pure gold. He would always give more than he took. His good humor and gentle nature were wonderful.

He made some poor decisions later in life, but he always kept his chin up. His battle with a myriad of health issues towards the end of his life was epic. Knocked down repeatedly, he always staggered back to his feet, determined to answer the bell for the next round. I told him he was like Rocky – he refused to quit, even in the face of overwhelming odds.

Even in his incredible ordeal, he amused us, challenged us, entertained us, and shared his daily challenges. Even in the end, facing a leg amputation, crippling COPD, and failing kidneys, he would struggle to his feet every day just to be able to stand. Ever the gentle warrior, he remained determined to his last breath. Even though we knew the end was near, his death hit us like a ton of bricks. We miss him terribly, but we are relieved he is finally at peace.

Christina and I won't be able to make either the gravesite service or the wonderful reception offered by Bill and Nancy in New York. But we salute all of you, his dear friends, who stayed in touch with him, encouraged him, scolded him, and stuck with him to the end. And towering above the rest of us were his beloved Francee and his devoted sister Carol.

Lindsay - July 14, 2019 at 05:58 PM

LI

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Lindsay - July 14, 2019 at 05:47 PM

“ Reminisces By Lindsay Schieffelin

I didn't go to school with Bill, as many of you did, so I missed all those "halcyon" years. I hooked up with Bill after I graduated from college in 1968. Bill was dating Denise Corsa, who later introduced me to Christina, my life partner and soulmate. Bill's, and my mutual interests in music, guitars, and bands brought us together.

I was trying to figure out what to do with my self after college, and Bill offered me a wonderful escape from reality. We hung out at his house in Fiddlers Green, played guitars, and got high. Then we formed a band with John Rowe (I can't remember who the drummer was). We were legends in our own minds. We got whatever gigs we could, one of which was at the Bath Club for a weekend event.

Bill and I also shared a love of performance cars. Bill had his beloved Jag, and I had a '69 Firebird 400 convertible. At that point I was living with my brother, John, in a garage apartment in Bayville. Since my Firebird was more reliable than Bill's Jag, we typically went out in it. The Firebird was also more fun. I had a speed shop on Long Island rebuild the engine, adding a dual pumping carburetor, high rise manifold, headers, and low restriction exhaust. With Mickey Thompson tires, it was a formidable street force.

One day Bill and I had to run over to an auto parts store on Jericho Turnpike for something. As we pulled into the parking lot, an absolutely mind-boggling song came on the radio – I'm a Man by Chicago. The lead guitarist blew our minds with his wild riffs. After the auto parts store, the next stop was the local music store.

Being footloose and fancy free, we did things we could only do as "wild and crazy guys". After a number of beers, and/or joints, we decided to see who could grow the most "creative" beard. Bill went for the straight, full-out beard. After a few weeks, a reddish blond fuzz covered most of his face.

I opted for a Fu Manchu with a twist. I grew longer sideburns and had them connect to the outside of the Fu Manchu. We also let our hair grow longer. The consensus, after several months of growth, was that Bill had the largest, scraggiest beard, but I won the creativity contest. It wasn't long before Denise and Christina put their feet down. Enough was enough!

Then there was the surprise birthday cake challenge. Denise, Christina, Bill, and I each had a particular favorite thing. So we made a cake in the shape of that thing. I forget what we made for Denise, but for Christina, we made the head of a beautiful horse. In Bill's case, it was easy. A guitar-shaped cake. Lindsay's cake was the piece-du-resistance – a cake model of his Firebird. The photo is here, and it was unbelievable. Only Bill's ingenuity could have pulled this off.

Oh yes, one other little project occupied us. Dune buggies had become the rage in California, and they were spreading east. Bill and I decided it would be great fun to build one. We scrounged around for the cheapest version we could find. Somewhere in the Oyster Bay area, we found a Myers Manx dealer who had one with some minor body damage. It was metal-flake red, and we didn't give a shit about the cracked fender. It was ours. See the picture of Bill in his VW mechanic's shirt. I had a Pontiac motors shirt.

Not having space to undertake a project of this magnitude at either of our homes, Bill went and talked to the two mechanics who owned Calamus Motors on South New York Avenue near Halesite. The two owners agreed to let us occupy some space in the rear of the building. This was great, because we had access to more tools than either of us possessed, and (limited) access to experienced mechanics.

Body in hand, we scrounged for a VW carcass for the chassis and running gear. Lugging it all to Calamus was a feat in itself. And because we wanted the hottest dune buggy on the East coast, we discarded the stock VW Beetle motor for the larger, more powerful

version that powered the

Lindsay - July 14, 2019 at 05:46 PM

FW

*Sounds like the definition of the good life at the time. Wonderful!
Thanks Lindsay!*

Francee Wasowski - July 15, 2019 at 07:19 AM

DF

I don't know what made me think of Bill this morning, but I did a search and unfortunately found his obituary. I was the drummer in his rock band in '65 before we both went to Vietnam. I saw Lindsay's post and he reminded me of John Rowe who was also in the band. I remember the gig at the Bath Club, but I also remember a gig we played at the Long Island Arena in Commack. Dr. Wainwright was one of Bill's neighbors and he got us that gig. I recall sailing with Bill in the Lightning that summer and I remember getting too close to a sailboat that was moored in Lloyd Harbor and we broke the mast! I just wish I could have talked to Bill again about playing the Beatles and Rolling Stones' songs in the summer of '65!

Dave Fosdick - March 19, 2020 at 11:32 AM

LI

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Lindsay - July 14, 2019 at 05:46 PM

LS

“ *Lindsay Schieffelin lit a candle in memory of William Lawrence Sansom*



Lindsay Schieffelin - July 14, 2019 at 12:35 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of William Lawrence Sansom.*



July 13, 2019 at 10:35 PM

EN

“ *1 file added to the tribute wall*



Eva Nash - July 13, 2019 at 07:10 PM

FW

“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Francee Wasowski - July 12, 2019 at 07:39 PM

FW

“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



Francee Wasowski - July 12, 2019 at 03:58 PM

FD

“ Bill and I drove off from the VA Hospital in St. Albans. To breakfast at an I-Hop (one of his favorite culinary adventures). We navigated the skinny passage between tables and the counter. Bill was maneuvering his walker while I led interference for him. Nobody was allowed to bump into him. We ordered. Bill’s fried eggs, bacon, toast, juice, pancakes and syrup. My poached eggs, grits (I love grits. Delta, Atlanta, grits), toast, bacon and pancakes. I gave Bill most of the bacon and all of my pancakes. He picked up his knife and fork and, waving them like dual conductor’s batons, began orchestrating a monologue about something totally Bill-ish. I peppered and hot-sauced my eggs and grits and proceeded to eat my breakfast. It was hot. I took my time. About fifteen minutes I’d guess. I finished, put down my knife and fork, and had a slug of coffee. Bill abruptly stopped talking and looked at my bowl, where the eggs and grits used to be. He said, “You ate that whole thing!” I looked at my watch and said, “Do you know how long you’ve been banging on?” His eyes got a little big. “Are your eggs cold? I bet they are.” I signaled the waitress and we reordered his entire breakfast, except for the bacon and pancakes I gave him. He ate those while he waited for his new, hot breakfast. Breakfast, mine, his cold one and now a hot one, was less than twenty bucks, not including tip. Worth the price of admission. Easy.



Frank Doherty - July 12, 2019 at 03:38 PM



What a great story! I’m sure he loved that. Carol

Jim Cleveland - July 12, 2019 at 07:26 PM

FR

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Francee - July 12, 2019 at 11:37 AM

FR

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Francee - July 12, 2019 at 11:26 AM

FW

2015 partially through the series of operations to remove the infection from his tibia, this is the picture Bill sent me before I came over from Norway to meet him for the first time in 40-50 years.

Francee Wasowski - July 15, 2019 at 07:27 AM

FR

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Francee - July 12, 2019 at 11:26 AM

LS

“ Please accept my sympathies for your loss. I have very fond memories of Bill as a classmate of his from CSHHS. Prayers to you all and for him on his journey home.
Linda Heuslein Spudic Class of 64

Linda Heuslein Spudic - July 07, 2019 at 05:22 PM

LR

“ Dear Carol and Jim,
I am so sorry for your loss.
I know your Mom and Dad are welcoming him home. 🙏💕

Laura Raganella - July 06, 2019 at 10:16 PM