



Mr. Bret George Bell

June 25, 1940 - January 9, 2014

Bret George Bell

Williamsburg, Michigan – After sharing a lovely Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday with his family and traveling to the Rose Bowl to cheer the Spartans on to victory, Bret Bell passed away unexpectedly and comfortably on January 9, at Munson Medical Center surrounded by his loving family.

Bret was born on June 25,, 1940, in Beloit, Kansas, to Lester and Helen Bell.

The family moved to East Lansing, Michigan, when Bret was two years old. He graduated from East Lansing High School in 1958.

He earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a MBA from Michigan State University. He remained a strong supporter and ardent fan of MSU throughout his life.

Bret married Carol Ann Smith on December 27, 1964. They raised two sons and shared a wonderful life together until Carol's passing in 2006. Bret worked with computers in college and after graduation was employed in Pennsylvania with Burroughs Corporation, the Facebook of its day. The family returned to Michigan when Bret started Coding Products in Kalkaska.

After retiring in 1991, Bret devoted himself to community service. He served as treasure of the Traverse City Community Foundation. He managed the remodeling of the Traverse City Opera House. He served as President of the Samels Farm Heritage Society helping to preserve and bring to life the area's history. He served on the Foundation Board of Northwestern Michigan College and the Munson Healthcare Board.

In 2010, Bret married long time friend, Linda Smith, and together they continued to enjoy life with traveling, gardening, building projects, family, friends and life on Elk Lake.

Bret enjoyed spending some of the winter months at his home in Green Valley, Arizona. There he explored the history and culture of the western United States.

He was an accomplished wood worker and always had a project in progress in his workshop. He created many furniture pieces for his home and family. He recently completed building a bridge, river and pond at his home.

Bret pursued everything with precision and passion. He was always eager to help others and was a natural, patient, wonderful teacher. Bret touched many lives as a friend, advisor, brother, husband, father, grandfather, uncle brother-in-law and businessman. He loved life and made every day the best it could be. He will be deeply missed by all that knew him.

Bret is survived by wife, Linda, children, Steve (Kate) Bell, Bruce (Heather) Bell and grandchildren, Grant, Ryan, Meredith, Seeley and Sawyer Bell. He is also survived by his wife's children, Cathy (Eric) Novak, Dustin Smith and Allyson Smith and her grandchildren, Courtney and Troy Novak. Sister; Pam (Gary) Raff, sister-in-law; Judy Bell and many nieces and nephews.

Wife Carol, his parents, Lester and Helen Bell, and brother Tom Bell preceded Bret in death.

Visitation for friends and family will be at 10:00 a.m., Friday, January 24th at the First Congregational Church, 6105 Center Road, Traverse City. The funeral service will be at 11:00 a.m. followed by a luncheon in the fellowship hall.

In lieu of flowers the family has requested that memorial contributions be directed to the Samels Family Heritage Society P.O. Box 111, Williamsburg, MI 49690. Please express your fond memories online at <http://www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com>.

Comments



“ Deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Bret. He was a wonderful man and will be missed very much.

Sincerely,
The Infusion Clinic Staff

Shari - January 26, 2014 at 09:16 PM



“ Linda I am so sorry to hear of your husbands passing. Please know that I am thinking of you all and my prayers are with you, Cathy, Eric, Dustin, Alison, Courtney and Troy and the entire family.

Love, Gwenn Riehm McAuliffe and Family

Gwenn McAuliffe - January 22, 2014 at 08:03 PM



“ Linda and family-My thoughts are with you in this time of grief. I was privileged to be able to spend time with you and Mr. Bell. God Bless you! Korwin Schrock, RN

Korwin Schrock - January 17, 2014 at 12:57 AM



“ Linda-
Sending thoughts of comfort and peace to you in your loss... you and your family are in my thoughts and prayers.
John Hood

John - January 15, 2014 at 08:16 AM



“ Bret was our classmate and friend through the years at LH Bailey Elementary School and East Lansing High School and he maintained those friendships through athletic and class reunions and ongoing contact with his closest friends from the East Lansing days. He will be missed but the memories of shared adventures and good times will be carried forward. He was a super guy/man!

Our thoughts are with Linda and his family. The ELHS Class of 1958

J. Ryan, ELHS Class of 1958 - January 15, 2014 at 04:32 AM



“ I met Bret in November of 1980 when Bret and business partner Ted Jacobs purchased Wojski Inc. in Mt Clemens MI. where I was employed as shop foreman. Bret moved me and two other employees to Kalkaska Mi to start his new company Chandler X LTD located at 277 Seeley Rd. I was promoted to Plant Manager and Bret was one of the best employers I have ever worked for. Bret and I spent many of days working as a team and he had such a huge impact in my life as a young man. I will be forever great full for his guidance and supervision as that has carried me threw my professional career. We had many of lunch and dinner discussions as well as business trips. I remember the time Bret and I where suppose to be at General Motors engine plant Tonawanda NY. Bret called me the night before and said "sorry you will have to do this trip on your own", I was skiing with my sons and broke my arm. He felt very bad about leaving me to go on this trip by myself. But I did not have a problem with. I went on the trip to GM and took care of business just has I knew Bret would have, My thoughts and prayers are with the family of Bret Bell.

Ron Spilak
Formally Plant Manager of Chandler X LTD

Ron Spilak - January 14, 2014 at 05:18 PM



“ My sincere condolences to Linda, Bruce, Steve and your families for your incredible loss.

“I know for certain that we never lose the people we love, even to death. They continue to participate in every act, thought and decision we make. Their love leaves an indelible imprint in our memories. We find comfort in knowing that our lives have been enriched by having shared their love.” -(Leo Buscaglia)

Bret Bell was a kind, generous, compassionate person who treated others with respect. I am grateful to have met and to have worked for Bret for 10 years. Each year I had more opportunities to spend time with him and he went from being my boss to becoming a friend for whom I have had the utmost respect. I have stayed in touch with him for the last 15 years after deciding to be a stay at home mom. At first we met once a month for lunch. Then our meetings were sporadic when we both had the time. The last few years he has counseled me through some trying times in my life. I will forever be grateful for his extremely supportive and encouraging nature. We have had some great conversations! Years ago Carol would join us and I will treasure those memories with the both of them very much. In the past few years our conversations would start out with an update about the boys & their wives, his grandchildren, Linda, her girls & their families, and maybe some stories regarding his travels. I would then update him about my two children, work, and school. (Then we would try to solve the world's problems). Bret called me in December for dinner and I immediately said yes. We had one of our best conversations ever. I have replayed parts of that conversation in my head several times since learning of his passing. The part that will always make me smile is: I said something that made him laugh so hard he snorted. Then I laughed so hard I cried. He said, “Thanks Cat, I needed that.” I feel like we both left the restaurant that evening thankful for our friendship and looking forward to the next time...

I am eternally grateful for the 25 years that I had the honor of knowing Bret. What an inspiring person- so generous with his knowledge. I miss him dearly.

This is how I will always remember Bret Bell – a friend, mentor, father figure and a remarkable human being.

Catrina Roberts
January 2014

Catrina Roberts - January 14, 2014 at 02:43 PM



“ I met Bret when I interviewed and then began working for Coding Products in 1983. He was a huge influence on many of my career and personal decisions. I so admired his strong commitment to his family, company and community. No matter how busy he was, he always had time to help those of us seeking his wisdom (example - stayed late to help me with finance homework I was stuck on!). He was such a role model as a strong and determined businessman who never compromised his fair and compassionate giving spirit. I will always be thankful I was able to know Bret. Kathy Ledford

Kathy Ledford - January 14, 2014 at 06:57 AM