



Bryan J. Crough

June 13, 1954 - June 16, 2013

Traverse City - The name Bryan Crough and downtown Traverse City are synonymous. Bryan always said that the merchants were the heart of downtown - we know Bryan was its soul. His vision, keen intellect, commitment to collaboration, and incredible sense of humor helped bring downtown back to life, making it the thriving community center it is today and the envy of every downtown.

Bryan passed away suddenly on June 16, 2013. He was born in Salina, Kansas on June 13, 1954. He played bassoon in the high school orchestra and enjoyed playing the piano, the first evidence of his love for the arts. Bryan graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in English from Marymount College in Salina with 52 students in his class. The college later closed, but Bryan always said that if he needed copies of his transcripts or degree, he could always write the Government Printing Office in Pueblo, Colorado.

Bryan moved to Traverse City in 1980 and after a stint with the US Census Bureau, began a career in the arts as Executive Director of the Arts Council and the Old Town Playhouse. In the private sector, Bryan would have been known as a turnaround expert. He solved the financial problems of the Playhouse and put the organization on firm footing. He worked to further integrate the Playhouse into the fabric of the community and to promote it as an important cultural resource. He also found time to act and direct smaller plays in the Studio Theater and triumphed in directing "Steel Magnolias" on the main stage.

In 1985, at age 34, Bryan was elected to the Traverse City Commission and after 3 years was appointed Mayor, his goal to further the Commission's role as a model for good government. In 1990 Bryan accepted the position of Executive Director of the newly merged Downtown Development Authority and Downtown Traverse City Association. He felt this gave him the opportunity to focus on downtown development, volunteerism, historic preservation and city government. The rest, as they say, is history and is exemplified by our vibrant and healthy downtown.

There is not a Traverse City landmark or institution that has not felt the impact of Bryan's

passion, commitment, wit and irreverence. Always willing to lend hand, crack a joke, mediate negotiations, emcee an event, champion a cause, regale you with his stories or just listen as only a trusted friend can, Bryan was there. Traverse City would not be what it is today without his brilliant intellect and dynamic vision. Bryan will be missed by the community he embraced and transformed.

Bryan is survived by his partner, Todd McMillen; his sister, Mary Kathleen Tranco; her husband, Aniceto; niece, Elizabeth Hayes, her husband John and nephews, Shawn and Patrick, his wife Sheri; two great nephews, Jacob and Ian; and bonus niece Nicole VanNess. He was preceded in death by his parents, Mary Louise and Kenneth Crough.

A celebration of Bryan's life and his legacy will be held on Saturday, June 22st at the Traverse City Opera House at 11 am. In lieu of flowers, donations to the City Opera House for the new dressing room project would be greatly appreciated.

Please visit <http://www.cityoperahouse.org> to make an online contribution.

<https://maxtix.whartoncenter.com/scripts/max/20000/maxweb.exe?ACTION=ORDER#anchor143>

Arrangements are being handled by Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

Events

JUN **Memorial Service** 11:00AM
22

Traverse City Opera House
106 E. Front Street, Traverse City, MI, US, 49684

Comments



“ I remember when I was young and Brian would entertain us at grandmothers house. One Xmas he got all twelve girls together and got us singing the twelve days of Xmas. Each one of us had a part and we did it on a tape recorder that I got for Xmas. It was a lot of fun.

Sabrina Samuelson

sabrina samuelson - July 13, 2013 at 08:05 PM



“ Julie Pierce lit a candle in memory of Bryan J. Crough



Julie Pierce - June 25, 2013 at 05:53 AM



“ Video Tribute - Press Play To Watch

Brian Crough's Video Tribute - June 23, 2013 at 07:31 PM



“ He lived more in his 59 years than a dozen regular people put together. He will be sorely missed.

Bill & Lynn Fifer

Bill & Lynn Fifer - June 22, 2013 at 05:23 PM



“ I met Bryan when I was a part of the United Way's Citizens Action Team a few times. He was a great "emcee" for the two days we interviewed people and discussed which organizations would get grant money. He was genuinely interested in getting the best outcome we could, had a great sense of humor and moved things along while giving us all a lot to think about. His death is a loss the community in many ways. He'll definitely be missed.

Jennifer Isbell - June 22, 2013 at 11:57 AM



“ Bryan, The State Theatre posted a fantastic tribute on it's marquee. Everytime we look down the streets of TC we will see you. What we will miss is your wit, wisdom and vision! We'll also miss the image of you conducting business on the street with that ever present coffee cup in hand! I hope heaven has a downtown and God has put you to work. It'll be a better place when we all get there just as TC is a better place because you stopped here first! David Barr

David Barr - June 22, 2013 at 11:37 AM



“ Todd,

With true admiration, I say thank you. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your friendship. Thank you for your humor. Thank you for being genuine. And, most of all, thank you for showing us the way. You understood the pulse of this region and brought hearts and minds towards realizing vision. As such, yours is a legacy- not a passing. Moreover, you operated with a wryness that revealed humanity in every conversation- no matter the subject area. I believe you to be a leader and mentor to us all. Thank you and rest in peace, my friend.

-Matt McCauley

Matt - June 21, 2013 at 03:15 PM



“ It's been 16 years since I shared a beer with Bryan in TC, but with Bryan it feels like yesterday. Specifically, every December the memories of Bryan, Dave Walker and I creating the Festival of Trains resurface and make me smile. We were winging it, no model to follow... but Bryan always had a new angle. Miss you, Bryan.

- Rick Antosh, New Jersey.

Rick Antosh - June 22, 2013 at 07:59 AM



“ Someone at the memorial said "how did you know Brian?" I said "How could you NOT know Brian".

Norm - June 22, 2013 at 10:58 AM



“ Todd:

I was so sorry to hear about the passing of Bryan. I knew him many years beginning when he served on County Planning where I worked. And, he was so helpful with information for the Fife Lake Village DDA, and then again when we started the Kingsley Village DDA. Of course, he was a wealth of knowledge. Just wanted you to know, he not only helped the City of Traverse City, but also the County and it's two incorporated villages. Weren't we lucky to be able to share someone with his knowledge and humor.

Linda Forwerck



Linda Forwerck - June 21, 2013 at 12:51 PM



“ Bryan was such a presence in so many peoples lives in so many ways that I wanted to share just two small incidents that while of no great significance in themselves do serve yet once again to display his wonderful talents of humor and kindness in managing so many aspects of his life. Several years ago at a Rotary social gathering at a Beach Bums game he commented on a cap I was wearing having obtained from a recent visit to Bald Head Island that it would be much more appropriate on his head. So he wore the hat for the entire evening and now it is an article of clothing with even greater meaning that I will cherish forever. Another years ago incident was when Bryan called me the night before the start of our annual Rotary Show to inform me that the skit I had written was going to be cancelled out of the show. A disappointment for sure , but a decision that had to be made for the betterment of the production, and to lighten the blow he created and gave a post show award to me for the "longest worked on skit that didn't make it in the show". I always loved his ability to provide situational humor, developing a funny slant on any subject at any time, rather than a more traditional joke telling style. His year as President of Rotary was one I enjoyed more than any other.

A light has certainly left our world, his absence will be felt by so many for a long time; yet his legacy of accomplishments will leave an imprint that we will continue to enjoy forever. It is perhaps fitting that the weather forecast for the next five days as we approach his memorial service is rather dismal, perhaps best reflecting the state of our world without this wonderful, unique person in it. My thoughts go out to Todd, his family, and the rest of us who cherished him. Cindy Ruzak

Cindy Ruzak - June 21, 2013 at 05:50 AM



“ He held his place--
Held the long purpose like a growing tree--
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

Edwin Markham
"Lincoln, the Man of the People"

anonymous - June 20, 2013 at 04:31 PM



“ Bryan was my cousin and we are the same age. I have many happy childhood memories of time spent with him in Kansas. As adults we saw each other at random family reunions. He was always excited and full of energy about his life in Traverse City. Time passes way to fast.
Denise Schott (Chicago, IL)

Denise Schott - June 20, 2013 at 02:23 PM



“ I met Bryan not long after his 1980 arrival in TC. We hit it off instantly. He was a political mentor to me, and I believe I gave some energy back that he fed off as well.

From the OTP to the fledgling GT County Democratic Party (which I had been a part of since McGovern '72) to downtown and real estate business pursuits ... to our long and fertile friendship ... I will miss you Bryan Crough.

In recent years I often stopped by his office when in TC, and more often than not he was "out somewhere downtown" and not to be found at his desk.

As it should be.

Sadly that desk is now empty. Of Bryan that is.

Carry on, my friend.

Marty Spaulding
Kalamazoo/Indian River/Gulf Shores AL

Marty Spaulding - June 20, 2013 at 03:05 AM



“ I did not know your Bryan, however, I felt I knew him. His name was always in the news paper or TV. I thought what a passionate and energetic man he must be as he was so involved with improving our community. How fortunate Traverse City has been to have such a leader as he truly left his mark on TC & made this world a better place for many. I will hold you in my prayers during this very sad time. Lynne Carbonell, Traverse City

Lynne Carbonell - June 19, 2013 at 07:57 PM



“ I have had the pleasure to know Bryan for over 20 years. He had helped me professionally in my downtown development issues and was always willing to "visit with" other downtown groups to help their issues. I loved his wit and passion for downtowns and life in general. I will miss him very much...you know he is up there organizing as we speak.

Barb Rosene, Marshall,MI

Barbara Rosene - June 19, 2013 at 07:10 PM



“ Thanks for helping Traverse City be what it is today! Sorry you had to leave so soon. May your loved ones and families, friends find peace!

Emmy Lou Cholak

Emmy Lou Cholak - June 19, 2013 at 06:50 PM



“ 1 file added to the album New Album Name



Ann McG - June 19, 2013 at 05:41 PM



“ Bryan was the best mentor and colleague I have ever had, and continues to inspire me today. Each of us should be happy to make just a fraction of the impact he did on the community. He will not be forgotten, and his legacy lives on.

Ann McG - June 19, 2013 at 05:46 PM



“ He was a model human being.

Todd, I'm so sorry for your loss.

Maryscott O'Connor - June 19, 2013 at 05:37 PM



“ I was truly fortunate to have known Bryan as a friend. He and I worked on a number of projects together, including the annual Rotary Show, which was great fun. I was extremely pleased when he stepped into the role of MC of the annual Chamber meeting, which I had filled for a number of years. Very simply, Bryan is one of the good guys. He led slowly and patiently and got things done. During a brief return visit to Traverse City several years ago I was astounded to see the progress that had taken place. I hope there is a spot somewhere downtown where Bryan's name can be placed so future generations can appreciate his vision.

Jerry Meyer
The Villages, FL

Jerry Meyer - June 19, 2013 at 04:55 PM



“ I worked for Bryan for 11 yrs. it was a true joy seeing his face daily and knowing he was behind me when I needed his support. I will truly miss him.

Kim Roth-Franklin - June 19, 2013 at 04:23 PM



“ I enjoyed working with Bryan during my time at 7&4 News. He was always available to update us and we shared some good laughs. Praying for his family and friends during this time.

Lauren Amstutz-Miller - June 19, 2013 at 02:29 PM



“ I enjoyed working with Bryan during my time at 7&4 News. He was always available to update us and we shared some good laughs. Praying for his family and friends during this time.

Lauren Amstutz-Miller - June 19, 2013 at 02:29 PM



“ I worked with Bryan for five years on the United Way CAT team. What a brilliant leader and all around great man. Can't imagine T.C. without him, but will continue to enjoy T.C. as he conceived and helped create it.

Dan Roach - June 19, 2013 at 06:23 PM



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Paul Heaton - June 19, 2013 at 11:56 AM



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A presence leaves.....a legacy does not! As a downtown business owner and TC native, I know few who I enjoyed working with more, or who I thought transformed this wonderful town. We could spar then laugh....all in the same breathe...and most of all I always knew I could rely on his fairness, collaboration and laser focus on doing the right thing.

I will miss you my friend.....Cindy Warner

Cindy Warner - June 19, 2013 at 11:19 AM



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Bryan was truly a great ambassador for Traverse City. His exuberance, creativity, passion and dedication will truly be missed and cannot be matched. Thoughts and prayers to his partner, Todd, and his friends and family.

Anonymous - June 19, 2013 at 10:17 AM



“ Brian Crough was one of the first people I met in Traverse City.
It was a good start.

I was so impressed that this small community had a guy so talented orchestrating its downtown development.

Soon after that first meeting, Brian asked me to speak to the City Commission concerning a snowplowing ordinance proposal, -he thought that the new General Manager in town from a big city might help sway the issue.

I said “Brian, you realize I just moved here from Memphis, Tennessee and have never shoveled snow in my life?”

“Oh, That’s OK, they will love to hear your southern drawl.”

I couldn’t turn him down.

He was like that.

That was the first of many interactions with Brian over the course of the 10 years my family enjoyed living in Traverse City. There were parking decks, office buildings, tourism issues, associations, meetings, Friday Nights, opera houses, zoos, theaters, festivals, special events, on & on & on...and Brian was always there, always working. The guy was everywhere.

Brian Crough was a leader and a visionary. He was smart, savvy, & funny. A terrific master of ceremonies, and just flat-out hard-working mover & shaker. A man who got things done.

Brian was a real character and a real champion, and I really admired him.

He was a friend.

TC will miss him.

I will miss him.

Robert Gattin
Hot Springs, Arkansas

Robert Gattin - June 19, 2013 at 09:31 AM



“ Bryan was a unique individual that gave his enormous energy to everything he did. As a new member of the DDA in 2001 Bryan gave me sound counsel on the workings of Traverse City. A few years later as the chair of the DDA Bryan continued his wise guidance -- and was continually looking for ways to make this city better. He will never be replaced and will be continually missed -- both as a leader and as a friend.

T. Michael Jackson

T. Michael Jackson - June 19, 2013 at 08:37 AM



“ I never had the opportunity to meet Bryan, but his legacy will live on. Downtown is a direct result of his love for the city of Traverse City and all of his hard work to achieve that end. Rest in peace Bryan!

Robert J Karczewski - June 19, 2013 at 08:27 AM



“ When I was a new reporter at 7&4 News in Traverse City, Bryan always made time to speak on camera with me, even if it was last minute. Being new to the area, he made my job my easy, and I could immediately see the passion he had for the city. He was one of the first people I came to quickly associate with the vibrant atmosphere of Traverse City.

Melissa Smith - June 19, 2013 at 08:27 AM



“ It was an honor to serve with Bryan on the DTCA board. Bryan certainly brought passion and energy to our downtown, you will missed. Rest in peace my friend.

Brian Kluzak - June 19, 2013 at 08:26 AM



“ Todd,

I am so sorry for your loss. Please know that along with so many others in our community my prayers and thoughts are for you and Bryan's friends and families. Although I never met him, he always presented a kind, humorous, and bright countenance to all.

Anonymous - June 19, 2013 at 08:26 AM



“ Bryan you were a visionary, leader and friend to many. Your passion and enthusiasm for Traverse City and Downtown were unsurpassed. I will miss your wit and charm. Our memories of you will forever live in hearts.

Marti Johnson - June 19, 2013 at 08:03 AM



“ Bryan Crough was Mr. Traverse City to us. He was approachable and friendly every time we saw him, and we saw him often, because Bryan was not one to sit in an office and wait for things to happen. Bryan was always full of good news about our city and he didn't realize it, but he, himself WAS the good news. There will never be a day, when we are downtown, that we won't miss this wonderful person who did so much for our city. God Bless his family and friends as they go through these difficult times.

Nancy and Dale Griesinger - June 19, 2013 at 09:37 AM



“ There aren't enough words to describe all the wonderful things Bryan did and what a brilliant man he was. My favorite memory is him coming across the Museum with his arms wide open yelling "Judy!!" What I love the most is that he was the funniest person I've ever known and he was so good to Todd. Oh, Bryan, you are so missed.

Judy Albers - June 19, 2013 at 08:01 AM



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Benjamin Marentette - June 19, 2013 at 07:27 AM



“ Bryan you were always there. I close my eyes and I can still see you and hear your voice. I loved being part of Chalk Art events years ago. I loved it when you were the MC at events. I loved knowing that you were around making sure that everything ran smoothly. Huge hugs to all of your friends and family. May your memory warm our hearts as we carry your dreams forward.

marcia borell - June 19, 2013 at 07:15 AM



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Laura Salvatore - June 19, 2013 at 12:33 AM



“ Bryan WAS Traverse City. His love for, commitment to, and unending involvement in the betterment of this community is unequalled. He always had a smile and kind word, a witty quip, or big hug. It is impossible to believe that we will not see him happily jaunting about town. I have known two people who made perfect use of a God given life, Bryan was one of them. He will be sorely missed. My heart goes out to Todd, his family, and this community.

Laura Salvatore - June 19, 2013 at 06:55 PM



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Laura Salvatore - June 19, 2013 at 12:33 AM



“ Kathy Greene lit a candle in memory of Bryan J. Crough



Kathy Greene - June 18, 2013 at 11:26 PM



“ BC - so many memories, so much to say but can't seem to find the words to express how I feel. What a loss to all who called you friend. TC will never be the same without you but your presence will be felt forever. Here's to you my friend, "break-a-leg" ;'(<3

Kathy Greene - June 18, 2013 at 11:32 PM



“ Can't imagine a family gathering without Bryan's laugh and smile. So glad we came up last summer to visit. Even though it was a hectic time we truly enjoyed our time with Bryan and Todd. Bryan will be missed.

Kate Eilders - June 18, 2013 at 04:08 PM



“ Bryan and I were born in the same city about a year apart. I never met him until I moved to TC. He always ahead a smile and time for a chat. He will be missed.

Kathy McFarren-Smith - June 18, 2013 at 04:02 PM



“ During our decade+ of downtown business ownership, Bryan contributed immeasurably to our success. Vision, vitality, responsible growth, humor, spirited camaraderie, doing the right thing, unaparlleled work ethic, etc. Bryan's spirit is foundationally fused with the downtown TC of the past, present & future. Thanks for getting this party started and RIP my friend. You'll be greatly missed & celebrated. Did someone just hear a bell ring?
Brad King & Family

Brad King - June 18, 2013 at 03:08 PM



“ Bryan Crough, you walked the talk. Your loss leaves a huge void in our beautiful city.

Colleen Wares - June 18, 2013 at 02:33 PM



“ In Loving Memory of Bryan J. Crough



Reynolds Jonkhoff Funeral Home - June 18, 2013 at 11:15 AM