



John Gillham

April 27, 2011

TRAVERSE CITY — John Frederick Gillham, 62, of Traverse City, died peacefully at home April 27, 2011, with his loving wife, Laura, by his side. Born June 17, 1948, in Greenville, the son of J. Ray and Isabel (Rice) Gillham, both of whom preceded him in death, John spent his early childhood years in small western Michigan towns near the shores of Lake Michigan. This led to a lifelong love of nature and the beautiful Great Lakes. Graduating from East Lansing High School in 1966, John went on to attain his bachelor's degree from Grand Valley State University and later his master's degree from Michigan State University. John's career followed many paths, from the private non-profit sector to governmental civil servant, then later to retail sales, followed by several years as a very modern Mr. Mom! His wife of 24 years, Diane, supported the family during this time. John's greatest joy was spending time with his young children, Jacob and Olivia, whom he loved immeasurably. This led to his interest in educating young children. He was grateful for the opportunity to guide the young minds of Traverse City children, where he taught for many years. In later years, John enjoyed his time working with colleagues and customers at the Traverse City Record-Eagle. John appreciated Diane's skill in planning numerous "road trips", exploring the U.S. from coast to coast with Jacob and Olivia. These family vacations provided precious memories that John always treasured. In retirement he loved feeding and watching the birds out his windows, as he grew beautiful house plants indoors. John enjoyed music and art, while cooking and baking became great passions. Spending time with his dear wife, Laura, who provided tender care to him in his final days, filled John with a deep sense of gratitude and love. In addition to his spouse, Laura, John is survived by his children, Jacob Gillham, of Ann Arbor, and Olivia Gillham, of Boston, Mass.; their mother and his former wife, Diane (Mahinda) Samarasinghe; stepdaughters, Sara Killman, of Grand Rapids, and Melissa (Zak) Barnes, of Rockford; and his only sibling, James (Darlene) Gillham, of Buffalo, N.Y. Cremation has taken place. A service to celebrate John's life will be held this summer, with the date, time and place to be announced. Memorial contributions may be directed to TART Trails, Inc., PO Box 252, Traverse City, MI 49685 or online at <http://www.traversetrails.org>. Please share your memories and thoughts with John's family by way of his online guestbook at <http://www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com>. The family is being served by The Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home and Cr

emation Service.