



## William Whiting

September 21, 2011

TRAVERSE CITY — William Arthur "Bill" Whiting passed away Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2011. Bill is known to many as an extremely talented mouth-stick artist. He taught himself how to draw using small head movements. Bill was paralyzed by a trampoline accident in 1960, at the age of 17. The accident left him a quadriplegic, with limited movement of one hand and complete paralysis below the chest. For the following 50 years, Bill defied and surpassed all expectations to become a noted artist first in his home state of Michigan, and later in his adopted home of South Florida. Bill could often be seen cruising down the street in his electric wheelchair, captain's hat on his head and his dog beside him. He would participate in parades, staff a booth at an art fair, and work at Cafe Tutu Tango in Coconut Grove, his Miami art-base for many years. His wry sense of humor won over everyone he encountered, and his courage and perseverance inspired many, both able-bodied and physically challenged people. Tragically, Bill's sharp mind was badly damaged when injured on his way to a political rally in Miami in 2004. He was unable to continue his drawings and came back to Traverse City to nursing home care and in declining health. While his family misses the ability to discuss many topics, including the embarrassment of the Detroit Lions, we are grateful that he is no longer in pain, and we imagine that he running the bases and kicking field goals to his heart's content. Bill is survived by his siblings, Joan, Richard, Howard and Juli; and by many cousins, nieces and nephews, whom he taught, through example, to overcome challenges, to be accepting of people with differences, and to be generous with and grateful for our good fortunes. Join the family and friends at a memorial gathering on October 16, from 1 to 3 p.m., at the City Historical Center on Sixth St. for a celebration of Bill's life. He would have turned age 68 that day. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to programs that enrich the lives of those living with catastrophic injuries. We also hope that you keep Bill in mind as you face tough times and let his life be an inspiration. Please share memories with the family at Bill's online guestbook at <http://www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com>. The family is being served by Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home, Traverse City.

# Comments

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“ I think of my friend, Bill, and often wondered how he's doing. We lost touch after he moved to Florida, but, mutual friends always let me know when they saw him & gave him my warmest regards. We met when we were both doing art fairs. I have a brother who is quadriplegic, so Bill and I shared some of the "dark humor" of dealing with life in a wheelchair. I'll always remember him as warm, witty and talented and will cherish his note cards that I've saved.

**Sharon Pellar** - June 07, 2016 at 11:53 AM

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“ I find it interesting how we meet people, maybe only for a short time, through this journey of life. I met Bill in Traverse City many years ago. He lived in the same apartment complex as a friend's grandmother. I ended up buying one of his barn scenes. A few years later, I ran into him at the Ann Arbor Art Fair. Every so often, I wondered about Bill and how he was. I just now stumbled across his obit. He was a very interesting fellow and am sorry to hear of his last few years.  
Mary Connell, South Lyon, MI.

**Mary C** - June 06, 2015 at 11:16 AM



“ I will miss Bill . I took care of him at MMC many times. He was a perfect patient and wonderful person. His friendship will be missed

**Diane Robinson** - May 26, 2020 at 06:46 PM