



Harold "Skip" Wilcox

January 17, 1954 - January 3, 2013

Dr. Harold "Skip" Wilcox

Jan 17, 1954 to Jan 03, 2013 Born in Fulton, NY to Ralph and Helen Wilcox, Skip had a deep passion for life that always kept him a kid at heart and an entertainer to all those around him. He had a strong faith in God and science. Growing up in a house on the Oswego River, Skip developed a fondness and respect for the water. He loved swimming, boating, waterskiing, fishing, and tubing down the Poudre. He was fond of telling others of his adventures, including buying an inflatable kayak for his wife, and then promptly getting thrown out of it in the rapids on their first trip; or making a small trout catch sound like bringing in a marlin; or what fascinating things he would do with a fliver boat. Since early childhood, Skip loved science and inventions. One of his early experiments involved making rocket fuel out of his mother's perfume. He passed on his passion of science to his daughter. The two of them would try to improve on rubber-band airplane designs, and build rockets from scratch. Harold also proudly served as the president of the Rocky Mountain Inventors Association for two terms. His playfulness extended into every other aspect of his life. He fed off the energy of children, and encouraged them to dream bigger. He would often be the instigator of neighborhood snowball or mud fights. On a sledding trip once, he convinced all the kids to help pitch in and build a large ramp to jump the toboggan off of. With great confidence, everyone climbed aboard, and shortly after hitting the ramp, kids, scarves, and gloves were scattered across the hill side, but great fun was had by all.

Skip could entertain the adults just as easily. Whether he was playing the guitar or ukulele, riding a unicycle, playing pranks, throwing an enormous party, or flying model helicopters; amusement was sure to be had by all. He was notorious for his story-telling. Few conversations could be had without an antidote about his world travels, his time in the Army, or simply a lesson on grammar or the origin of a phrase. He could even jibber-jabber about jibber-jabber. He also loved to travel, see the world, and meet new people. He would proudly wear a jacket adorned with patches from the numerous countries and places he visited. Though interested in architecture and history, he was most fond of learning about the culture by talking to those who lived there. Even if he couldn't speak the language, he could easily make new friends and communicate through gestures. He learned to say "Cheers" in over a dozen languages, and even got his family invited to a stranger's wedding in India. Skip described his career path as "colorful." After graduating from Fulton High School, he briefly attended Oswego University, but decided it wasn't right for him at the time. He then worked at Harden's, making furniture until he joined the Army in 1974, where he was a Helicopter Mechanic and NBC NCO, and among other recognitions, received the Army Commendation Medal. It was his time in the Army that would change his life forever. While stationed in Nürnberg, Germany, he met a young woman, Gerda, on the steps of the Burg one afternoon while playing his guitar. She became his loving wife through thick and thin. Not only did he fall in love with Gerda, but he fell in love with Germany, which he considered his second home and where they had their daughter, Esther, in 1977. Skip had a deep interest in languages, how they are learned, interpreted, and change over time. After being discharged from the Army, he was determined to finish his college education, and did so by obtaining two bachelor's degrees from Colorado State University, and a Master's and a Doctorate from the University of Colorado, Boulder. He found his vocation by sharing his knowledge of the English language with others through teaching English as a Second Language. This path led him to jobs in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which allowed him to travel to places like Greece,

Egypt, Syria, and India. In September of 2011, he found his dream job at the University of Akron instructing Saudi teachers at the Institute of Polymer Science. In March of 2012, what was to be a ski vacation, ended with a diagnosis of Lymphoma. After a long and determined fight to beat the disease, he passed away peacefully last Thursday. Skip wanted to share a message with everyone:

Give something of yourself to others; teach them something; and learn something new from them.

okbye His wife, Gerda, and daughter, Esther, wish to extend their gratitude: to the Oncology Nurses at Poudre Valley Hospital for their patience and acceptance, to Dr. Moore for his care and exploring every option, to his sister, Peg, for donating her bone marrow, to our friends and neighbors for your support, help, and for always being there: Paula, Halls, Phoebe, Jean, Steve, Ron and Mary; and to Tom for being his "only" friend all these years. A celebration of his life will be held at St. John's Lutheran Church, 305 East Elizabeth at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 12, 2013. Friends may send condolences to the family at bohlenderfuneralchapel.com.

Tribute Wall

KA

“ I'm deeply saddened to hear of Dr. Wilcox's passing. I was glad to be his student at the Institute of Public Administration in Riyadh for a semester in 1998. Sorry for your loss.

Khalid Alkhuzaym - February 05, 2013 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ Dear Gerda, I am heartbroken by this sad news. My prayers are with you and your family. Sincerely,

Jose Calle - January 17, 2013 at 12:00 AM

CD

“ Dear Gerda and Esther, I am so sorry for your loss. My thoughts and prayers are with you. Cathy Dittenber

Cathy Dittenber - January 16, 2013 at 12:00 AM

JH

“ All of the staff here at Pop-Ins were so sad to hear of Harold's passing. He will be remembered fondly as one of our favorite clients. His stories and antics were always a joy. Our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with Harold's family and friends.

Jennifer Hood - January 15, 2013 at 12:00 AM

AG

“ Gerda, My prayers are with you and your family. I wish I had had a chance to meet Skip. He sounds like a great guy. You were truly blessed to have him in your life. Ann Greene

Ann Greene - January 14, 2013 at 12:00 AM

KG

“ We send our deepest sympathy to Harold's wife and family. We only knew Harold briefly as the neighbor to his rental house but we enjoyed our visits with him and he was a remarkable man. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this difficult time.

Kirk & Judy Gilbow - January 13, 2013 at 12:00 AM

JN

“ We were so sorry to hear of Harold's passing. We so enjoyed knowing him through RMIA where he led the group well and had so much to offer. This is a great loss to the community. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. John and Jeri

John and Jeri Neely - January 12, 2013 at 12:00 AM

LF

“ Dear Gerda and Esther, I was so sorry to hear from you about the passing of your husband/Father, Harold. I just had spoken to him four weeks ago, and he sounded optimistic about returning to Fort Collins and blessed to have his family and extended family close to him. I will always remember Skip for his big smiles, wonderful and crazy conversations, guitar playing at parties and the deep love he had for his wife, Gerda. He loved having Lego and puzzle projects with Esther and helped her create great Halloween costumes, as she was growing up. He was such a hands on Father. Harold was such a smart and funny friend. He will be missed by many. All our love, The Hacker Family, Lisa, Tom, Kate and Laura

Lisa and Tom Hacker and Family - January 10, 2013 at 12:00 AM

RD

“ All my love to the Wilcox family. My kids grew up next door to you on Eastdale, and I guess I did too. I always enjoyed Skip but even more we shared a deep mutual respect. I especially noticed his strong values and thoughtful intelligence. We had fun together, but mostly I remember serious conversations standing out in the yard. I will be out of town Saturday; my thoughts and wishes will be with Skip, Gerda and Esther. Love to you all from the Denmarks.

Rabbi Dr. Larry Denmark - January 10, 2013 at 12:00 AM

JP

“ My wife Miriam and I extend our sincere condolences to Harold's survivors and extended family. In addition to serving as President of the Rocky Mountain Inventors' Association, Harold was very active in sustaining our monthly "Round Table" meetings in Fort Collins and judging state science fairs to select the recipients of awards offered by RMIA. In working with Harold on these activities, I enjoyed many conversations re science, inventions, language and humor, sometimes aided by a brew or two. We know that he will be missed by the many people whose lives he touched. As a Nasvy veteran, I wish him "fair winds and following seas" in the hereafter.

James K. Poole - January 10, 2013 at 12:00 AM

MG

“ Dear Gerda and Esther, I was shocked to read of Skip's passing in the paper. What a unique character he was! I enjoyed many lively discussions with him especially when we taught international students together at CSU. He always spoke very endearingly of you two and it was clear that among his many interests, you two were his favorites. He touched many lives - mine too. Please accept my sympathies.

Margie Gough - January 10, 2013 at 12:00 AM

MD

“ Dear Gerda and Esther, This is Mike from the Albertson's Meat Department. Words cannot describe how I felt when I picked up the newspaper today and learned of Harold's death. He was my friend and long time customer at the store. From talking to him I thought he may have had this thing beat. I will miss our conversations on just about everything. Please accept my heartfelt condolences. My prayers are with you. If there is ever anything I can do for you please let me know. Mike

Mike Del Duca - January 10, 2013 at 12:00 AM

Jl

“ I do not know Skip but I feel I do now after reading about his Beautiful life ... Such an interesting man ... I want to thank you Skip for helping protect our US of A : ... Prayers going out to you and your family ... Such a Beautiful Love Story ... Pease to you Skip Wilcox

Joey mc Andrew II - January 09, 2013 at 12:00 AM

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