



William G. Golson

December 3, 1948 - September 30, 2016

Fort Collins lost a free-spirited adventurer and fun-loving outdoorsman, father, husband and friend with the passing of William “Will” Golson, 67, of Fort Collins on Friday, September 30.

Friends and family remember Will as a warm and caring man who remained a kid at heart, always made others laugh and embraced living life to the fullest. His playful spirit, sunny disposition, and never-ending sense of wonder and desire to explore will be held forever in their hearts and deeply missed.

Will was born December 3, 1948 in San Francisco, California. He grew up in Oyster Bay, New York enjoying the New England woods as an active Boy Scout. Later his family relocated back to California where he graduated from San Rafael High School in 1966.

Will attended the University of California, Santa Cruz where he received an undergraduate degree in Physics. He embraced the 1960s California lifestyle, taking his Honda motorcycle for midnight rides over the Golden Gate Bridge, playing his favorite artist Bob Dylan on heavy rotation, and sporting an army jacket over his proper style loafers — which often made him stand out as a New Englander in the land of Levi’s and surf shorts. Will met the mother of his sons, Emily, at Santa Cruz and they were married in 1972 in Manhattan Beach, California.

In 1972 they relocated to a secluded home outside of Concord, Massachusetts. Will loved being away from the city, while still being only a train ride away from his computer programming job in the Beacon Hill area of Boston. It was here he bought a used Volkswagen Bus with a “Get High on Mountains” bumper sticker and spent time hiking and bicycling throughout New England. Will enjoyed weeks-long bicycle trips with only his sleeping bag strapped to the back of his bike, stopping to sleep in farm fields along the way.

In 1976, Will was accepted into nine PhD programs across the country, but decided to attend the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Here he fell in love with Michigan Wolverines football, earned his PhD in Computer Science and became father to his first son Seth who was born in 1982. Soon after the family moved to Houston, Texas, where Will taught Computer Science at Rice University. While in Texas Will’s second son Alec was born in 1988.

In 1989, Will accepted a position at Hewlett Packard and the family moved to Fort Collins, Colorado. The corporate setting was a change of pace, and for the first time he ditched his New England loafers for tennis shoes, and embraced the outdoor lifestyle of the Front Range. He met his current wife, Deborah Artzer in 2001, and they were later married in 2011 in Fort Collins. At the time of his passing, Will was employed as Webmaster for the Rocky Mountain Research Station, U.S. Forest Service in Fort Collins.

Life in Colorado afforded him ample time outdoors and room to explore, and even though the VW bus was gone, Will spent his free time “getting high on mountains.” He ran six miles daily for over four years, regardless of weather or even the flu. He enjoyed skiing, whitewater canoeing, backpacking, road biking and was active in Cub Scouts with his son Alec. Will was a firm believer in, “If it can’t kill you, it’s not a sport;” while coincidentally, he was also known by those close to him as a man with nine lives.

Will's love of the outdoors never wavered, as it was here that he was most content and happy. He was involved with the Poudre Paddlers Canoe Club and Rocky Mountain Canoe Club where he spent hours on the water creating his own line through the river — even if it led to a few swims.

He was also active with the Poudre Sunrise Cyclists, and last year alone logged over 6,000 miles on his road bike. Will enjoyed the challenge of riding the mountain passes, and completed multiple “century rides” and other races.

In addition to exploring nature and challenging himself in outdoor sports, Will was a diehard Denver Broncos and Michigan Wolverines fan. He also enjoyed reading everything from classic literature to science fiction novels, the New Yorker and the New York Times. Will spent time pondering logic puzzles and riddles, and was an excellent chess player who taught his sons to play, and still remains undefeated.

Will and his wife, Deborah enjoyed traveling, and together they visited many places including Belize, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, Alaska and Britain among many other locations. True to Will's exploratory spirit and love of new places, their travels were often based on cycling, backpacking and boating adventures. A favorite was canal boating for two weeks through Wales.

To Will, true freedom was the pursuit of passion and knowledge, which gave him the opportunity to challenge himself to succeed by no one's standard other than his own. He was a true “bushwacker” in life, a man unafraid to take risks, who both blazed his own trails in the wilderness and led his own path through life. He didn't care if he got lost, finished last or ran into the proverbial or actual bad weather — he always continued moving forward.

Will is survived by his wife, Deborah Artzer; two sons, Alec of Fort Collins and Seth (Darcy) of Portland, Oregon; two stepsons, Josh Sutherland (Sara) of Wellington and Will Sutherland (Lindsey) of Wellington; two sisters, Anna Gloria (Jesse) of Grass Valley, California and Jane Golden of Grass Valley, California; one nephew, Joey Burgess of Sonoma, California; and three grandchildren. He is also survived by the mother of his sons, Emily Golson of Fort Collins.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Janet Guyre Golden and Harry Golson; and brother, Rich Golden.

As a man who was forever fearless in nature and in life, he spent his life in pursuit of new hobbies, places, knowledge and friends. His only dread was a Bronco loss to San Francisco, or even worse a Michigan Wolverine loss to Ohio State. Go Blue.

A Memorial Service will be held on Friday, Oct. 7 at 2:00 p.m. at the Bohlender Funeral Chapel. Following the service, a reception celebrating Will's life will be held in Overlook Park at the Pavilion, located at 2930 Virginia Dale Dr., Fort Collins, Colorado 80521.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, memorial donations may be made in care of Bohlender Funeral Chapel, 121 W. Olive, Fort Collins, Colorado 80524 to Ciclismo Youth Foundation, a 501(c)(3) public charity dedicated to making cycling opportunities accessible to youth in Northern Colorado.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

OCT 7. 2:00 PM (MT)

Bohlender Funeral Chapel
121 W. Olive Street
Fort Collins, CO 80524
(970) 482-4244
<https://www.bohlenderfuneralchapel.com/>

Tribute Wall

AG

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Anna Gloria - November 23, 2016 at 10:41 PM

AG

Thank you all

Anna Gloria - November 23, 2016 at 10:52 PM

SK

“ Will and I first met in 1948 at Mount Zion Hospital in San Francisco. Our mothers were close friends who went through their pregnancies together. Will and I were born a few days apart. Harry Golson and my father, Maurice Levinson were also friends, and I can still remember the glamorous photos of the two couples dining in various restaurants in the city.

When Will's mother, Janet married Richard Golden, they moved to Oyster Bay, my parents divorced, and contact was lost until the entire Golden family moved back to California, Los Altos Hills, to be exact, and I became re-acquainted with "Billy", as we called him then. We were fourteen or fifteen years old. He was my very first "boyfriend" and we corresponded by letter, long distance between Marin County and Los Altos. By the time Will's family had built a home in San Rafael, we had somehow lost contact again, this time for good.

Through these many years, from time to time, I have wondered how the family was doing and what "Billy" was up to. I am so sorry to discover that he is no longer with us but glad to know, in reading the tributes and seeing pictures, that he had what seems to be a very happy, full, accomplished and adventurous life. My heart goes out to you, his family, and I know that one day soon you will find strength in all the memories that no one can take from you. After so many years, I still have mine and am not at all surprised to hear what a wonderful man Will turned out to be.

Suzi Marion Kohi

Susan Kohi - November 17, 2016 at 10:29 PM

GB

“ 2 files added to the album Will G. Arkansas River 2014



Greg Brigham - October 08, 2016 at 12:15 PM

GB

I hadn't realized how many boating adventures Will and I had been on until I perused my photo albums. Wow! After attending the ceremony on Friday, there are so many things about Will that I never knew. His humbleness is appreciated, as is his sense of daring and come-what-may attitude. I will tell the Moose Turd Pie joke in his honor.

Greg Brigham - October 08, 2016 at 12:29 PM

KN

“ *My son Matt, husband Dennis, Katie and Steve, Deb and Will went on a canoe trip on the San Juan River. Denny didn't want to do Government Rapids with Matt so Will volunteered. They got a little hung up on a rock or two but of course got through. Matt only spent 4 days on the river with Will but often asks about him, calling him a great soul. We know Will as being joyous, funny, generous, unique and as Matt said, "A great soul."*

Kathy Nimetz - October 07, 2016 at 11:20 AM

DW

“ Will, your positivity, determination, and laid back approachable nature will be sorely missed. I am lucky to have been able to share some great rides with you.



Daniel Walker - October 07, 2016 at 11:14 AM

TG

“ I am deeply sadden by the loss that you and your family have encountered.
Will, I loved having you in my spin class and especially your dedication to training. We would do two spin classes a day sometimes and then you would do a 50 mile ride like it was nothing. I enjoyed having breakfast with you and Deb at our favorite spot- Snooze and will miss our conversations. Remember, you can do anything for minute!
I am honored and blessed to have known you Will.

Deb-I can't imagine what you must be feeling right now, but I want you to know that we are just a phone call away. My heartfelt condolences. You and your family are in my heart and mind.

Hugs Talisa (Tee) and John Yeast

Talisa Gula-Yeast - October 07, 2016 at 09:23 AM

SG

What a great picture! Thank you for sharing

Seth Golson - October 07, 2016 at 02:33 PM

TG

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Talisa Gula-Yeast - October 07, 2016 at 09:13 AM

PP

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Paul Patterson - October 06, 2016 at 10:33 PM

RM

“ 2 files added to the album *Double Triple 2015 A-Basin*



Roy Mita - October 05, 2016 at 10:53 PM

SW

“ We are so sorry to hear of Will's passing, and will always appreciate the memories of shared river trips. Deepest condolences to Will's friends and family.

Love,
Garrett Downs and Stephanie Walton

Stephanie Walton - October 05, 2016 at 06:25 PM

LH

“ I'm so sorry to hear about Will's passing. I worked with him on the early incarnation of the Rocky Mountain Research Station website some years ago. He was patient and knowledgeable and fun to work with. My deepest condolences for your loss. Laurie Huckaby

Laurie Huckaby - October 05, 2016 at 04:15 PM

SG

“ A young man



Seth Golson - October 05, 2016 at 11:35 AM

SG

“ A young man



Seth Golson - October 05, 2016 at 11:33 AM

JP

“ *Our deepest condolences to Deb and family members. We have lost an extraordinary friend and are saddened beyond words.*

Here are two great kayaking pics of Will! One relaxed and maybe contemplative. The other "high action"!

Jon and Mary Prouty



Jon and Mary Prouty - October 04, 2016 at 06:48 PM

AN

“ *1 file added to the album New Album Name*



Anna - October 04, 2016 at 03:57 PM

SK

Ahh this is how I remember you guys. My sincere condolences to Seth, my heart goes out to you. Sally Korshak (Austin Hach's mom).

Sally Korshak - October 07, 2016 at 06:36 PM

AN

“ 2 files added to the album *Grass Valley, CA*



Anna - October 04, 2016 at 03:54 PM

RF

“ 1 file added to the album *Dismal 2012*



Roger Faaborg - October 04, 2016 at 03:14 PM

JG

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Jane Golden - October 04, 2016 at 12:31 PM

JG

This is when I would have contacted Will to say...I uploaded the same photo twice; how do I fix this?

Jane Golden - October 04, 2016 at 01:00 PM

AG

“ 1 file added to the album *Grass Valley, CA*



Anna Gloria - October 04, 2016 at 12:21 PM

JG

“ 1 file added to the *tribute wall*

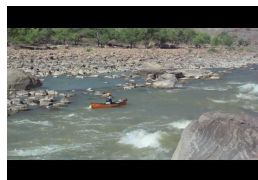


Jane Golden - October 04, 2016 at 12:14 PM



Richard
Ferguson

“ 1 file added to the album *Video of Desolation-Gray canyons on the Green River*



Richard Ferguson - October 04, 2016 at 11:35 AM



Richard
Ferguson

“ 2 files added to the album *Saratoga 2006*



Richard Ferguson - October 04, 2016 at 11:34 AM



Richard
Ferguson

“ 4 files added to the album *Paddling Photos*



Richard Ferguson - October 04, 2016 at 11:30 AM



Richard
Ferguson

“ 3 files added to the album *Saratoga 2010*



Richard Ferguson - October 04, 2016 at 11:29 AM



“ 1 file added to the album Paddling Photos



Roger Faaborg - October 04, 2016 at 11:21 AM



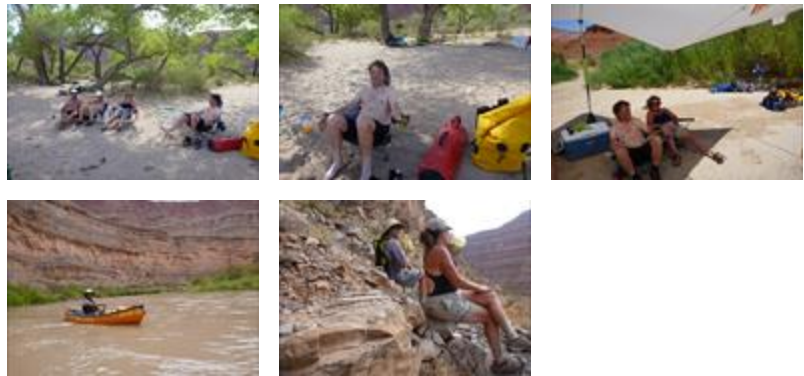
“ 2 files added to the album Dismal 2012




Richard Ferguson - October 04, 2016 at 11:19 AM



“ 6 files added to the album San Juan 2012



Richard Ferguson - October 04, 2016 at 11:13 AM


Richard
Ferguson

“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Richard Ferguson - October 04, 2016 at 11:07 AM

TM

“ *I also worked with Will and echo Diane's sentiments. He was a real pleasure to work with for the last years of my career. I would run into him around town occasionally and he was always friendly and had a moment to visit. I was very sad to learn of his passing and know that those who still worked with him will miss him every day.*

Todd Mowrer

Todd Mowrer - October 04, 2016 at 10:09 AM

DB

“ *I worked with Will "remotely" for several years. I loved his dry sense of humor, his work ethic, and that wonderful combination of deep intelligence and common sense. I'm sorry I never got to meet him in person. I did not even know what he looked like until I pulled up this site! He did mention his family often during our work calls; it was obvious he treasured the relationships. Will was one of the good guys, and I'm deeply sorry for your loss.*

Diane Banegas

Diane Banegas - October 04, 2016 at 09:56 AM

BM

“ 1 file added to the album *Vail Pass August 2015*



Barb McNelly - October 04, 2016 at 09:49 AM

BM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



Barb McNelly - October 04, 2016 at 09:46 AM

DD

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Dave Dornan - October 03, 2016 at 01:52 PM

DD

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Dave Dornan - October 03, 2016 at 01:49 PM

DD

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



Dave Dornan - October 03, 2016 at 01:47 PM