



Mr. Bruce Wayne Cutler

February 23, 1946 - January 21, 2021

Bruce Wayne Cutler, 74, died at Crescent Green of Carrboro Assisted Living Facility on January 21, 2021, after spending the last three decades in the Durham area. He was the elder of two sons born to Kenneth Cutler and Frances Warner Cutler in Myrtle Point, Oregon. His family moved to Huntsville, Alabama when he was eleven and his brother was nine. He graduated from Butler High School in 1964, and was an engineering student for two years at Georgia Tech before transferring to University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) where he majored in English. He was a talented if unpublished writer, for years producing poems and marvelous letters of considerable literary quality.

Bruce was in college at the time of the VietNam War. He was a conscientious objector who was drafted before he finished his degree. He spent two years at Presidio Army Base in San Francisco doing lab work before returning to UAH to complete his BA around 1970. He then returned to the San Francisco area, spending several years at the San Francisco Zen Center and Tassajara Zen Mountain Center before returning for a few years to his parents' home in Huntsville.

After his mother died and his father left Huntsville, Bruce moved to Durham, North Carolina, close to friends. He lived for many years at a group home for gentlemen with mental illness. During part of this period, he worked at the restaurant of his friend Frank Farrell who was a co-owner of the Ninth Street Bakery at that time. He knew Frank from the Zen centers in San Francisco and at Tassajara. Bruce was a client for many years of Threshold, a clubhouse for persons with mental illness in Durham, which provides a day program for its clients and contracts with local businesses to provide employment for its members.

During the last few months, Bruce was a resident at Crescent Green in Carrboro until his recent death due to heart disease.

Bruce leaves behind to remember him, his brother, Brian Cutler of Huntsville, friends from the Harper and Hart families of Huntsville, and others to whom he was important, many of

whom remember him from their formative years in the mid to late 1960's. He will also be fondly remembered by many who knew him over the years from his group home and at Threshold.

Condolences, memories and pictures of Bruce may be shared at the following link at Scarborough & Hargett Celebration of Life Center, Inc.

www.scarboroughhargettcelebration.com/obituaries/Bruce-Cutler-2/

A private memorial for Bruce is being considered in Huntsville after the pandemic. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Threshold at P.O. Box 11706, Durham, NC 27703 or made online at www.thresholdclubhouse.org.

Comments



“ Thanks so much to you, John Williams, for filling in some of those biographical gaps in the story of Bruce and his friends here among the memories section. I too, remember some of the times at your family's backyard place that you mentioned when we were in college. I imagine there are many who treasured some of those old memories with Bruce and friends, some of these now gone, and some of them still remembering. I am glad you are still alive to remember. Thank you for sharing. Sincerely, Carolyn Steger.

Carolyn Steger - February 15 at 08:26 AM



“ Sometime in 1966 I met Bruce, Brian, and Tom. We spent many hours in the “pad” in the backyard of my grandparent’s house in Five Points talking about philosophy, life, literature (Joyce’s Ulysses for one) and poetry (Tom’s and Bruce’s) – enjoying music – breathing in Tom’s pipe smoke – and (I think) the occasional cigar smoke blown by Bruce or Brian. We even experimented with the suspected (by us) mind altering properties (because of Donovan’s Mellow Yellow) of dried banana peels.

As a psychology major, Brian was serious and tried to keep us grounded. Tom was a wonderful, committed writer. Bruce was smart, elliptical, and feisty - a friend who refused to cut me any slack - because he didn’t think I needed any. In early 1967, all three of them sent me deeply thought-out, much appreciated letters during my four months in the Army at Fort Polk, LA.

Tom met a girl named Pam with whom he struck up a loving relationship. They got married! I remember visiting the two of them in a house they were renting on Wells Avenue or Randolph Avenue, near California Street. They were very happy. Bruce went to the School for International Training, Iran Peace Corp, in Vermont for six weeks. That was his hoped-for escape from the draft. He liked the people and the free and easy atmosphere although he had to work from 8AM to 9PM six days a week.

In the early Fall of 1967, Bruce, Brian, Dan Morgan and I rented a room on the second floor of the Twickenham building in downtown Huntsville for a month. We had somebody's record player and one or two very modest sticks of furniture in it. The building was nearly empty. We rode the freight elevator to our floor. I bought Dylan's "Nashville Skyline" and we listened to it up there. That was a bittersweet time. Delicious feeling of being alive: singed nerve endings; pain of loss; suffering; sensitivity. The ambiance of the old hotel, the view of the downtown street leaning out our window and the camaraderie were special.

Bruce was getting close to finishing his BA in English at UAH.

In June of 1969, Bruce was back at the Iran Peace Corps training school and planning a trip to see Marti Whitehead in New York. But, unfortunately, he had to go into the Army after all. He went 1AO, and was about to start basic, non-combat training, followed by medical core training. He was expecting to be sent to Vietnam. However, in August of 1970 Bruce was in San Francisco, working at Letterman Hospital, which I assume was an Army hospital.

In 1978, Bruce was in Huntsville. He wrote a letter to the editor at the UAH Exponent about an incident at an art gallery. The operator had a policeman tell Bruce to leave. Bruce was upset because his freedom to pursue his art, which is his freedom itself, was suppressed. He had Don Hart in his corner as his "what you might call attorney". The paper printed Bruce's letter along with a picture, a profile shot of Bruce, standing in his parent's garden, holding the handle of a garden tool. That was the last item I found in my trunk of keepsakes from 'the old days'.

The last time I saw Bruce was sometime around 1990, when I was near the end my

time as a (hot stuff) project manager working at AVEX electronics. While walking through the hallway at work one evening, I ran into Bruce. He was on the cleanup crew hired by the contractors who did that work for AVEX. He was pushing a broom or something like that. It was an awkward scene. I am sorry to admit that, at that moment, I was at a loss to bridge the gap I perceived in our lifestyles. I only saw Bruce there a few times there.

I apologize Bruce - and I wish you were still here so you could make some appropriate remarks. Comments about mistakes in this timeline and the plodding writing style are probably warranted too.

John Williams - February 13 at 02:11 PM



“ John Williams is following this tribute.

John Williams - February 10 at 11:50 AM



“ Bruce and I were friends for many years, both in San Francisco and Durham, NC. We practiced Zen together, lived together, and worked together. One of my favorite memories is having a smoke on a break, regularly, with Bruce outside the Ninth Street bakery in downtown Durham. My nickname for Bruce was Brooiskis Lambruskis. It always bought aa smile to his face while he was working at the computer at the Bakery. Bruce, wherever you are, you bring back fond memories. We miss you Lambruskis.

Frank Ferrell - February 07 at 09:25 AM



“ 2 files added to the album Memories Album



MeriSusan Simms - February 06 at 11:01 AM



“ Bruce, Bruce and Brian with pig

Carolyn Steger - February 06 at 05:28 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



MeriSusan Simms - February 06 at 10:57 AM



“ Bruce, his brother Brian and my late husband, Tom Harper, we friends from their time at Butler High School in Huntsville, Alabama. And, in his later years, on a number of occasions, Bruce would venture to Springfield, Virginia for a visit with us. Likewise, Tom would visit Bruce in Durham . . . oftentimes when Brian was visiting from Huntsville so the threesome could relive "ole times".

It was a "trip down memory lane" for me to review these old photographs and share them . . . all in the hope they will bring a smile to your face.

"Sometimes you never know the value of a moment, until it becomes a memory" --
Dr. Seuss

Bruce, you will be missed!

MeriSusan Simms

MeriSusan Simms - February 03 at 06:12 PM



“ 9 files added to the album Memories Album



Carolyn Steger - February 03 at 05:29 PM



“ This is a picture of Bruce with his brother Brian and friend Carolyn during a visit to Durham around 2000.



Carolyn Steger - February 03 at 04:40 PM