



## Wylie Gerdes

September 13, 1947 - June 13, 2014

Wylie Gerdes, a man who was devoted to his family and friends, passed away peacefully on June 13, 2014 at his home in Royal Oak. Wylie was born in Auburn, Nebraska, on September 13, 1947, the youngest child and only son of Evelyn and Leland "Pete" Gerdes. He loved to tell stories about his life in Nebraska, including riding a horse to school, attending a one-room schoolhouse, and being terrorized by a black rooster. He attended the University of Nebraska on a baseball scholarship and later moved to the Detroit area to pursue a career in journalism. He became editor of the Livonia Observer and wrote a popular column called Middle Earth, a nod to his interest in the Lord of the Rings trilogy. He joined the Detroit Free Press where he was a sports copy editor, news reporter, and wrote columns on boating and skiing, two of his passions. When the newspaper strike occurred in 1995, Wylie left journalism to pursue a career in information technology, becoming a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer. He concluded his career as network administrator at the Troy School District, where he helped oversee the development of a complex computer network. There, he met friends who would become his motorcycle buddies. An avid reader, Wylie began each day reading The New York Times. He loved reading about economics and history. At the annual Moran family vacation at Black Lake, he would bring along "light" reading, like the History of the Peloponnesian War. He was particularly interested in Shakespeare -- his Shakespeare action figure stands guard on his desk. A lifelong athlete, he enjoyed alpine skiing and sailing with his family

on their 28' Maxi named Stargazer. He competed in several Mackinaw races and raced Lightnings on Cass Lake. Wylie took up cycling in his early 50s and trained extensively for long distance rides. Two months after being diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer in 2007, he completed the 100 mile Seagull Century ride in Maryland. Summers were spent riding hundreds of miles around Michigan. On his 62nd birthday, Wylie and his daughter, Kerry rode 62 miles in celebration. When he was physically unable to ride his bicycle, Wylie bought a motorcycle and began a new adventure going on rides with his friends. His time was not wasted. From studying history and physics to cycling and sailing, he lived life to the fullest. He will forever be missed by all who had the pleasure to know him. He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Kathleen Moran; daughters, Noel Scot Montrey and Kerry; son, Derek; grandsons, Kirby, Kelly and Casey; sisters, Connie Lowell Feighner and Donna Larry Bratcher; in-laws, Robert and Suzanne Moran, James and Sue Moran, and Paul and Tami Moran, and numerous nieces, nephews and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Linda. Visitation is 3 to 8 p.m. June 19 at Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Home, 705 W. Eleven Mile, Royal Oak. A memorial service will be at 10 a.m. June 20 at the funeral home. The family asks that memorial contributions be made to the charity of your choice, the Livestrong Foundation or Focus: HOPE Community Arts Program. Wylie chronicled his journey with cancer at <http://blog.wgerdes.net>

# Tribute Wall

BM

“ I first met Wylie Gerdes on the Auburn High School football field in southeast Nebraska. Tecumseh High School and Auburn were rivals. I tackled him twice. It was more like I fell down, and he tripped over me, but it was important to me that the flailing of arms and legs were scored as tackles. Our coach, loaded with scouting reports, had warned us about Gerdes the guy is really good. As I learned later, Wylie was really good at most everything he tried to do. We both went to the University of Nebraska in 1965 and soon became close friends. Wylie was smart, funny, and full of restless energy. He got me to go to my first anti-war rally. Another time we cut classes to attend a poetry reading by Allen Ginsberg. He once tried to teach me how to play tennis. Wylie's judgment lapsed on occasion. We shared the feeling in those days that much more of consequence was happening outside university classrooms than inside. We touched base with one another through the years, although less often as time passed. Our talk was always about family. He loved them all and was immeasurably proud of being associated with them. I will miss Wylie. He lived life to the fullest. I will remember him as a model of what a good man should be. Bob McNergney 720 Northwood Avenue Charlottesville, Virginia 22902 rfm@virginia.edu

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**Bob McNergney** - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM

JL

“ I am sorry to hear of Wyle's passing. He was a pleasure to work with when he covered the boat races and his stories were always thoughtful and carried a touch of humor. I always tried to be a step ahead of what was happening and found he was usually two steps ahead of me.

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**John Love** - March 25, 2015 at 12:00 AM