William "Bill" John Miller

AUGUST 18, 2024

With great sadness we announce that William “Bill” John Miller of Regina passed away peacefully with his family by his side on Sunday, August 18, 2024 at the age of 74 after a brief illness.

Predeceased by his loving wife Catherine “Cathy” Miller; parents, Andrew “Dusty” and Membery “Mickey” Miller; sister-in-law Elaine and brother-in-law Andrew Dumba; sister-in-law Lois Czemeres; sister-in-law Susan Gibson; father-in-law Archie Gibson and mother-in-law Mary Gibson.

Bill is lovingly remembered by his son Robert “Rob” and daughter-in-law Meagan Miller of Toronto; brother-in-law Dennis Gibson of Ottawa; brother-in-law Alvin Czemeres of Regina; and many nieces, nephews, cousins and close friends.

Bill was born and raised in Regina, Saskatchewan, the son of Dusty, a carpenter who came over from Scotland during WW2 to train Canadian soldiers, and Mickey, a hairdresser who owned her own business. Once Dusty met Mickey, he never returned to Scotland. Dusty was a perpetual tinkerer, spending hours taking apart then putting back together everything from watches to cars. Bill fondly remembered working on cars with his father. His mother Mickey, fashionable and independent, was a staple of the community for decades.

During his youth Bill worked for the beach store at Saskatchewan Beach, near the family cabin he built with his father. Bill was a lifelong lover of music – he saved up

his weekly earnings to feed his habit of buying the latest 45’s and was particularly fond of the Beatles.

Dusty was diagnosed with cancer when Bill was still a young man. He stayed home to look after his father who eventually succumbed to cancer just before Bill’s 21st birthday in 1971.

Bill met the love of his life Cathy at “The Old Gold” in 1972. They saw each other a week later at “The Paddock” and romance bloomed from there. Soon after they took Cathy’s parents for supper at “The Old Gold” and in 1973 they were married. Last summer Cathy and Bill celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Cathy passed away last fall after a brief battle with cancer.

Bill and Cathy welcomed their son Rob into the world in 1981. Bill enjoyed playing catch, going camping, fishing and taking Rob to annual events like Mosaic and Buffalo Days each year but one of the biggest passions he passed on to Rob was his love of movies. He took Rob to see various action, adventure and horror movies, some of which Rob was too young to get into. But since he was tall for his age, Bill bluffed them into all manor of martial arts flicks, gun fights and scream fests.

Bill travelled extensively throughout Canada, spending time in Quebec, and found his way overseas to the UK, specifically visiting his father’s family in Scotland. He always brought back colourful stories, spending time in the Nordic countries of Europe, including Sweden. Bill and Cathy delighted in taking Rob on trips throughout Canada, including Manitoba to visit Bill’s family, and the US on cherished family vacations to California, Nevada, the Dakotas and elsewhere. The whole family were fans of theme parks, taking multiple trips to Disneyland. They divided their “ride time” at parks between slow rides they’d all go on, faster rides that only Rob and Bill would try and the fastest, highest, scariest rides that only Bill would dare to traverse.

Like his father, Bill decided to learn a trade and apprenticed as an electrician, eventually making it his first career as he worked with a colourful gang of characters on government buildings around the province. A skillful speaker and ardent proponent of workers' rights, he worked tirelessly in his local unions, often deeply involved with negotiations with management. He eventually found employment in Property Management with the Saskatchewan government before founding his own electrical business, dubbed "Miller Lights." He operated his business out of Dysart, SK, where he and the family moved to be closer to Cathy's aging parents.

In Dysart Bill found a community that welcomed him with open arms and where he gladly volunteered his time to various clubs and causes. He joined the Dysart Volunteer Firefighters, taking the courses and training necessary so he could in turn train others. He joined the Dysart Lions Club, eventually rising to District Governor. Through his work with the Lions, he and Cathy not only travelled to countless small communities throughout Saskatchewan but also throughout the US for various Lions conventions.

Bill shared Cathy's love of Christmas but where she had the conceptual design, Bill had the practical knowledge and electrical abilities. Their house in Dysart became a prime stop along annual Christmas tours. Bill was rivaled only by Clark Griswald in his ambitions, but with much better results. Rob remembers many a cold winter's day, holding ladders while his fearless father climbed onto the roof tops to install various lights and displays. He took that love of outdoor illumination with him when they eventually moved back to Regina but Cathy's interest in "Christmas Villages" took that passion indoors. When Bill and Rob bought that first set of miniature, light-up Christmas houses, they could not have imagined how they would eventually take over the house each year nor how complex they would get. Bill would spend days on the floor and under tables, configuring then reconfiguring the complex wiring necessary. It was all worth it - they became a popular yuletide

destination for family and friends to see how it all could possibly top the previous Christmas.

Rob’s marriage to his wife Meagan was a great source of joy for Bill & Cathy. Bill and Meagan developed a jovial relationship and made up affectionate nicknames for each other. Meagan always loved how hard she could make Bill laugh.

Bill was a passionate golf and curling fan, watching tournaments every weekend and enjoying documentaries about his favourite players. He was particularly drawn to stories of those who had triumphed over adversity.

A lifelong dog lover, he and the family adopted many dogs throughout his life. He enjoyed books and television shows about rural vets and those who helped animals.

Bill loved a good joke, passing that love onto his young son by thrilling him with tales of a mythical joke-telling competition that he too could win, if he just learned enough jokes. He delighted in teaching Rob as many jokes as possible and hearing all the others he had learned elsewhere.

Wherever he went Bill made fast friends, was quick to offer a helping hand and exuded warmth and camaraderie.

The family wishes to offer their sincere thanks and gratitude to the doctors, nurses and staff of the Regina General Hospital’s SICU for their care and compassion.

A private gathering will be held in September. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Bill’s name to the Regina Humane Society.

Messages of Condolence

My deepest condolences Rob and Meagan. What wonderful tribute. I can just hear Uncle Bill’s laugh and see his smile. Their door was always open - like a second home. So grateful for that. Really miss them both.

— Shannon Dumba

Bill was my cousin. I have many fond memories of us as children. My heartfelt condolences to Rob and Meagan at this very difficult time!!

— Wendy Thorne

Beautifully done. I will always miss Bill's salutation to me; "Hey there, guy!" every time I came over to the house, and always loved sharing a laugh with him. One of the greats. My deepest condolences to you both.

— Fraser Wiest

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Printed on October 5, 2026