



Mr William Gilbert

December 30, 1926 - January 18, 2016

William “Bill” Gilbert, 89, formerly of South Egremont, died Monday evening at Berkshire Medical Center.

For many years he was president and general manager of Catamount Ski Area in South Egremont MA/Hillsdale NY, Bill started his career in the skiing industry in the early 1950s as a snowmaker and operator of Fahnstock Ski Area in Harriman, NY and Silvermine Ski Area at Bear Mountain, both New York State Park ski areas. In 1960 Bill and business partners Don Edwards and brother Sandy Gilbert designed and built Sterling Forest Ski Area in Tuxedo, NY. In 1967 he co-invented the first airless snow machine and started his company Snow Machines International (SMI) In addition to being a pioneer in the snowmaking industry, he was the east coast and European distributor of Tucker Snow Cats. He was recognized for his commitment and contribution to the skiing industry in when 2006 he received the Ski Areas of New York Hall of Fame Award, and in 2009 he was presented with the National Ski Area Association’s Sherman Adams Lifetime Achievement Award.

He was born in Brooklyn, NY on Dec. 30, 1926, the son of Morris and Florence Kirschman Goldberg. He served in the US Navy during WWII and earned a Bachelor’s degree in accounting from Syracuse University in 1952. He and his wife, Grace Cohan Gilbert, were married Sept. 9, 1951. Grace died Feb. 17, 2004.

Bill is survived by a daughter, Patti Serden and her husband Scott of Beverly Hills, CA; a son, Tom Gilbert and his wife Beverly of Lenox; and grandchildren

Kelli and Heather Serden, both of Los Angeles, CA and Matthew Gilbert of Lenox. He is also survived by his longtime ski business partner and good friend Don Edwards.

A celebration of Bill's life will be at Catamount Ski Area on Saturday April 16, 2016. In lieu of flowers, a donation in his memory may be made to STRIDE Adaptive Sports or the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, both in care of the ROCHE FUNERAL HOME, 120 Main Street, Lenox, MA 01240.

Tribute Wall

DB

“ dear gilbert family am very sorry for your loss. worked in my twenties for sandy,bill, helen ,b,and eli at franklin liquors in franklin square.i am now 62 and still remember how nice and friendly they were just to let you know they will be missed danny beirne

dan beirne - December 02, 2019 at 01:04 PM

Gail
Stickle

“ To The Gilbert Family -

I will always remember Bill fondly...he was kind to me and my children. Jonathan and Stephanie grew up on that mountain and I have wonderful memories of spending many years at Catamount along with the Taconic Hills school program as well. I have videos of Jonathan learning to ski with Bea on the kiddie slope. I think he three years old.

It started back in 1975 and over the years the countless phone calls during the wee hours of the morning during those cold winter nights are etched in mind. What's the temperature...shut down the guns...keep the lifts moving...freezing rain...I never thought it would end. Bill, we need to make snow while we can.

The last I saw Bill is when I came to say "good-bye" for I was moving to Florida..he was so kind and understanding. I did not want to leave without thanking him for his friendship over the years.

I was so sad when Bob shared of his passing. The time Bob shared with your family on the mountain. He was deeply moved and honored...we cried together over the phone.

His picture here is how I will always remember him. He was a good man to all.

With sympathy...Gail Stickle

Gail Stickle - May 13, 2016 at 05:28 PM

PC

“ *The Catamount Alpine Race Team is saddened to hear of Bill's passing, and gives our condolences to the Gilbert Family. The commitment of the Catamount family run operation to creating opportunities for youth ski racing has been nothing but outstanding. Hundreds of racers and life long skiers have been developed through the program. The immeasurable joy of our young racers, who completed their first race last weekend, would not be possible without the contributions Bill has made to ski operations, snow making and our race program.*

Peter Chudy

President of Catamount Race Team P.A.

Peter Chudy - January 26, 2016 at 08:27 AM

JE

“ *Those who knew us would call Bill my partner and friend but in reality he was more the brother I never had. Our families were one. Grace and Rosalie go even further back to Syracuse where they were sorority sisters.*

We shared winter homes and we traveled to and from Catamount in a convoy.

Bill will surely be missed but I am left with wonderful memories that can never be erased from my mind.

He was truly one of the pioneers of snowmaking as we know it today.

Jann has sat for many hours listening to the Gilbert/Edwards family stories that she almost feels a part of that history. It's unfortunate that she didn't get to know Bill until about fourteen years ago but she enjoyed his company, our trips together and she felt the warmth that Bill generated.

Our deepest sympathy to the Gilbert and Serden families.

Don & Jann Edwards

jann edwards - January 24, 2016 at 09:48 AM



“ *1 file added to the album Tribute Wall*



Jeff Edwards - January 23, 2016 at 08:27 AM

MD

“ Your friends at Thunder Ridge Ski Area extend our deepest condolences to Bill's family and the entire Catamount family. Bill was a true pioneer in the ski industry and he will be greatly missed.

Dean & Wayne Ryder, Don Taylor, Meryl DiDio and the staff at Thunder Ridge

Meryl DiDio - January 23, 2016 at 07:34 AM

LA

“ *Bill was a cherished friend and fellow sailor for many, many years. He will be missed and we send our sincere condolences to Tom, Bev and the entire family.*

Bill was an extraordinary individual. Over the many years I spent with him when we were sailing together, I saw a talented, determined, smart and practical, and very humorous man. We always laughed at the fact that in the summer we'd be talking about skiing and in the winter talking about sailing. Bill showed us that the person who shouts the loudest is not the one with the most to say, and certainly not the one to listen to. His smile could easily cheer a room, yet when you were with him his attention seemed entirely focused on you. Marilyn, early on, crowned him, "The Gentleman's Gentleman."

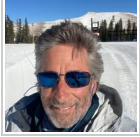
We shall not see another man with his talents and bearing in our lives.

I'll remember and cherish the stories Bill could tell: days in the Navy, early struggles in the snowmaking and ski business, frustration with weather forecasters, the many Bermuda races, and one hilarious story in particular of an early trip back from Bermuda with a damaged rudder when Bill had been awake and at the helm for over 24 hours and was sure he saw an angry dog, frothing at the mouth, running over the water astern trying to catch up with him!

Smooth sailing and fair winds Bill...

Lang Allen

Langdon Allen - January 21, 2016 at 07:58 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Tribute Wall*



Clifford Edwards - January 21, 2016 at 04:52 PM

BG

“ To members of the Gilbert family,

The Catamount Ski Patrol sends its sincere condolences and is saddened to hear of Bill's passing. Bill's commitment to and support of the patrol will be remembered and appreciated. His efforts to keep us well informed of ski industry changes, mountain upgrades and new procedures every year allowed us to always be well-prepared for the season. His memory and Catamount legacy will be with us forever.

Bud Gardner

Director, Catamount Ski Patrol

bud gardner - January 21, 2016 at 01:24 PM

MW

“ Tom, Bev, Matt & the entire Catamount family~

Deepest sympathies to those left behind, and celebrating a life well-lived.

I'll never forget my first encounter with Bill when I approached him with the prospect of starting a new adaptive program at Catamount nearly 15 years ago. After nearly an hour of deliberation and discussion, the final question was posed to me by Bill..."Can you teach my grandson how to ski?" With a guarantee and a handshake, the deal was sealed! In the seasons to come as Matt tore up the slopes with STRIDE- Bill graced me with permission to park in 'his special parking spot'... he was adored by the STRIDE team, and will be missed.

Sending our heartfelt condolences and prayers. May the memories of a life well-lived comfort you .

Much Love, Mare & LJ and your STRIDE family

Mare Whitney - January 21, 2016 at 11:24 AM

AF

“ Billy made some great recommendations to both my father and I through the years. He truly understood the ski industry and all of its challenges. He will be missed.

Condolences from all of us at Nashoba Valley,

Al Fletcher

Al Fletcher - January 21, 2016 at 09:46 AM

JP

“ Bill welcomed me to Catamount Ski Area nearly 15 years ago. I can remember his calm demeanor and generous disposition. He was someone you could talk to easily. When he asked you how you were doing, you knew he genuinely wanted to know. Bill was a real pioneer in this industry from ski area creation to snow making development and even being instrumental in the development of grooming trails with the Tucker Snow Cats.....(He and I would have many conversations about the latter as I found the topic fascinating.) Bill even supported a few retail ideas that I had.....

I will miss him

JP

John Petersen

*snowsports instructor, weekend private lesson co-coordinator
Catamount Ski Area*

john petersen - January 21, 2016 at 07:33 AM

PS

“ 4 files added to the album Tribute Wall



Patti Serden - January 20, 2016 at 10:47 PM

SA

“ Bill and I had many "enthusiastic" conversations about hill space for race training. They usually went something like " YOU WANT TO COSE WHAT SLOPE " I don't know if we walked away understanding each other but I always understood Bill's point of view.

I will miss you

Steve Adams

Race Director

Steve Adams - January 20, 2016 at 10:04 PM

SA

*correction CLOSE**

Steve Adams - January 20, 2016 at 10:06 PM

RS

Bill was a wonderful guy and a friend in our mutual world of skiing for many years. It was always a pleasure to see him and work with him as his friendly spirit was contagious. Our thoughts are with you and your family Bill. you have good back-up!

Ross Stevens, Stevens Engineering

Ross Stevens - January 21, 2016 at 12:56 PM

RE

“ To Tom ,Patti, Beverly Matt, Scott, Kelli and Heather:

Your father and grandfather was like an uncle I never had. Bill marrying Grace, my mother's closest friend, led to an amazing ride with Don for 60+ years. Bill was like a brother my dad never had. Together with Sandy, Bill and Don were told in Averell Harriman's office(before he was governor) "you boys are nuts" but we'll let you operate a ski area at Fahnestock. Soon after, Bill dragged Don to Wilmot Wisconsin in c.1953 to look at a snow gun. They were hooked. 20 years later, 3 ski areas turned into one and three families were sharing one house in Hillsdale, NY then S. Egremont, MA. then back to Hillsdale,NY. It was like Yours, Mine and Ours. They were great partners because Bill couldn't golf and Don couldn't sail - they didn't have to spend summers together. I am glad Colleen and I were able to visit and speak with Bill two weeks ago. He was as cheerful and cordial as he could be when he didn't have to be. That was Bill. We will miss him.

Love, Rich, Colleen Kenny and Lauren

Rich Edwards - January 20, 2016 at 09:39 PM



“ To Tom, Beverly, Matt & Patti, Scott, Kelli, and Heather,

A separate card will be coming from us but until then Sue, Savannah, Sam and I would like to express our deepest condolences on the loss of Bill. Our hearts are broken losing Bill as he was an integral part of our family from our first days on this earth until Monday. He should have gotten a lifetime achievement award just for putting up with the Edwards kids beginning in 1954 with the arrival of Cliff followed in three year increments with me, Rich, and Nancy.

Bill probably spent more time telling me more than any of the other kids hanging around what equipment I shouldn't mess with, snowmobile I should not touch, or Sno-Cat, tractor, or other vehicle I shouldn't drive around at the ski areas, winter and summer. Nevertheless, Bill probably knew that I had an engineering passion like him and that sooner or later I would go to engineering school so he gave me a long leash.

I worked the night snowmaking crew at Catamount during the Christmas breaks while at RPI in late 70's and Bill always waited for me to arrive back at the house in the morning for the report on the previous night's progress.

As one of many memories, the one that jumps out at this moment pertains to the morning I came in from a previous night's snowmaking to report to Bill that the downhill retaining berm of the pond that had been constructed at the top and left of the Nastar slope/Catamount chair the previous summer had failed overnight. Bill asked me that morning at around 6:30am "How did it go last night?". My reply was "You know that pond at the top of the Nastar slope?" Bill replied "Yes". I replied "It is now in the parking lot."

To say the least Bill about blew a gasket. He was gone in a flash heading over to the mountain. Lucky for me I was not on the receiving end of that.

The ski areas, and peddling liquor as a sideline I suspect, was his life. I was with him as a young kid at the original demonstration of the airless electric snow making machine on the west side of the Hudson River in Nyack one cold winter morning that eventually evolved into SMI. I ran parts for Tucker Sno-Cat for him to many ski areas in New England when they needed emergency deliveries and did whatever I could to be involved in the ski areas until I moved away. I did whatever he asked at the mountains always as well as stuff he didn't ask which occasionally got me into hot water.

Bill and Grace blessed us with their presence at our wedding which meant the world to us. We will always have those pictures of them both to cherish. We miss Grace and we will miss Bill terribly and will never forget who he was and what he meant to us all.

Jeff Edwards

Jeff Edwards - January 20, 2016 at 07:33 PM

DK

“ *Tom
Condolences to your entire family
Your Dad was a Great Guy and a Good
Friend for many years
may Bill Rest in Peace.
Sincerely
Dave Kenney -Dedham Mass.*



Dave Kenney - January 20, 2016 at 05:50 PM

SB

“ *Many memories of Bill, from showing me his early snow guns to discussions of the old days in the ski industry. A true pioneer, we will all miss him greatly.*

*From all of your friends in the ski industry, from Scott Brandi,
President of Ski Areas of New York, Inc. Proud to have known Bill*

Scott Brandi - January 20, 2016 at 05:01 PM

NC

thank you bill for all your kindness and support in working on your lift gears.

*peace to you and your family. long live Catamount!
sincerely nick chieppo*

nick chieppo - January 20, 2016 at 05:35 PM

LV

Dear Gilbert and Edwards Families, Tom and Rich,

Bill was a great friend and a mentor to me when I got involved in the business 23 years ago, and will sorely be missed. I thoroughly enjoyed and remember fondly his personal snowmaking 101 classes I attended while my very first snowguns were being built in your shop, which are running strong to this day using hardly any power at all. He was the best, the Father of Snowmaking. May he rest in powder peace for eternity and never worry about wet-bulb again. We will salute Bill with snowguns every time we fire up.

Your good friends at Plattekill,

Laszlo and Danielle

Laszlo Vajtay - January 20, 2016 at 06:11 PM

JM

*To the Gilbert and Edwards Families, Tom and Rich,
Sending our heartfelt condolences and prayers. May the wonderful memories of the good times you shared, help you through the days ahead....*

*Bob Green
Joy Martorell*

Joy Martorell - January 20, 2016 at 08:17 PM

CE

*Dear Tom, Beverly, Matt, Patti, Scott, Kelli and Heather,
I am very sorry to hear that Bill has passed away. I will always be grateful to Bill. I enjoyed visiting with him the few times I went to Catamount. He was always interested in what I was doing and in what was going on in Vail. We were so fortunate to grow up in the Ski business. The passion he had for this great sport has been passed to multiple generations of Gilbert's and Edwards's.
From skiing to snowmaking to selling Tuckers, operating a Marina, planning a new ski area in Kent, CT that never happened and crewing for Bill on his sailboat, it was always exciting for me growing up. I was so proud to be on the periphery of what these entrepreneurs were involved in. It was always an avenue to share great times and adventures and to create long-lasting friendships. I would not be in Colorado for the past 40 years if not for the gift of skiing that was given to me by Bill and Grace, Don and Rosalie and Sandy and Helen.
Thanks Bill!*

Cliff Edwards

Cliff Edwards - January 21, 2016 at 05:30 PM