

A tribute to Bill Ward

By John Telencio

Emblematic of the spirit of Anchor House, Bill Ward Sr.'s legacy of unrelenting service to all, profound caring, and zest for living life to the fullest will continue to inspire generations to come.

Bill's 30 years of service to Anchor House didn't begin until age 53! Billy Jr. influenced his father to bicycle the classic Ride for Runaways after enjoying several years of participating himself. Bill Sr. amazingly did it all: bicycled the Classic 500 miles, shared time bicycling and providing SAG support, provided invaluable route scouting reports with his wife Carol during ride week, served as "yellow truck" meeting host extraordinaire with heartwarming stories, entertained as a percussion musician during the end-of-ride picnic and completed 500 miles during the recent COVID years on a stationary bicycle "For the Kids".

Daughter Wendy Ward Nuel stated, "his most memorable and proud moment was bicycling with his entire family during the 19th Anchor House Ride in 1996". Joining Bill on the "Family Affair" ride were his wife Carol, sons Bill Jr. and Warren, daughter Wendy, and son-in-law Rick.

Wendy expressed the following: "My dad was there for everything. He would drive 4-5 hours to watch grandchildren play soccer; didn't miss anything. He was determined to be at the (Anchor House) banquet despite how he was feeling." (Bill had a bicycle accident and surgery weeks before receiving his 30-year plaque in July of 2022.)

Bill inspired many to volunteer and ride for Anchor House. He recruited Armen Simonian to bicycle the classic 500-mile Anchor House fundraiser and became his roommate during ride week.

Armen said "He was a very caring person who would always stop and give his time to someone in need," also commenting, "consumed by him, you become part of his journey, strikes up a conversation about anything and everything,"

Bill's service extended well beyond the Anchor House family. I remember Mr. Ward as a fatherly role model during the early 1980s when he volunteered as a Hamilton High School West Band Parent.

Whenever he walked into a room, Mr. Ward displayed a charismatic spark larger than life. His warm caring smile, calming voice, and confidence provided a feeling of comfort. He approached any challenge with the belief that nothing was impossible to solve or achieve.

The list of organizations to which Bill Ward provided selfless service to others and extraordinary skill is truly inspiring. They include police lieutenant, paramedic, Civil Air Patrol Captain, charity clown & stilt walker, ambulance driver, handyman, snow plow operator, church elder and dedicated member of the Shriner Masonic Charity, where he incredibly spent every Christmas Eve helping children!

Despite all these contributions to humanity, his priorities, according to Wendy, were "God first, family and friends second, and work third."

Let's indeed celebrate a life well lived, filled with love and service, on Bill Ward's birthday this July 14th during the Classic Anchor House Ride for Runaways. A job well done faithful servant - July 14, 1939 - September 17, 2022.