



Willard Denison Robison

December 14, 1953 - March 22, 2022

Wearing one of his colorful Hawaiian shirts from his vast collection, Bill Robison entered the larger life, surrounded by the love of his family and friends, and supported by the superb nursing care of Hospice of Northwest Ohio, Perrysburg, on March 22, 2022.

Bill was born in Toledo, Ohio on December 14, 1953 to Mary Hubbard Robison and James Jacobs Robison. He grew up in Ottawa Hills and attended Salisbury School in Connecticut.

From a very early age, Bill demonstrated an interest in all things relating to sound and turned everything he could get his small hands on into a microphone. His first successful venture into the Northwest Ohio music community was as a live sound engineer for numerous local bands. He went on to found Great Lakes Sound and Light in 1985 and served as president until his retirement in 2018. He was supported by his dear friends and colleagues Todd and Julie Mitchell and has always been revered by his many, many friends in the entertainment community, ranging from musicians, to sound and lighting technicians, stage-hands, and promoters who have cherished Bill's friendship, generosity, honesty, and sharp, sarcastic wit.

Over the years in the sound and lighting business, Bill worked thousands of events. He had the opportunity to work with several of our nation's Presidents

and Presidential candidates. He earned a Certificate of Appreciation from The White House Communications Agency for his outstanding abilities, attitude and professionalism which enabled the agency to provide critical communications for the President and White House Staff.

A proud lifelong Toledoan, Bill was instrumental for events such as the Party in the Park and the Rally By the River series in the late 1980's and 90's, providing audio, lighting and consulting services. His success and dedication allowed Great Lakes Sound, Inc. to provide meaningful employment opportunities for hundreds of people over the years through the current day. Bill was very customer-oriented and always went out of his way to provide "value added service" to his clients.

Bill loved to travel, Hawaii always a frequent and favorite destination. He loved sharing odd facts and figures regarding airport runways, population, parking lots and parking garage capacity, and all things Steely Dan! He was a great music and movie lover and had a remarkable collection of books, vinyl, and discs that would rival any library. Bill was a true friend who would do anything to help friends, family and employees at the drop of a hat.

Bill's ancestors were implemental in the settlement of the Midwest in the 19th century. His ancestor, Thomas Hunt, was commissioned a Captain by George Washington in 1791 and served as commander of Fort Wayne, and Fort Mackinac as well. In 1803 Colonel Hunt built Fort Industry, considered the site of Toledo's founding. The Robison family arrived in Toledo again in 1870 and purchased the horse drawn street car line in Toledo which evolved into the first completely successful urban electric railway in the world. Bill's great-great-grandfather, David Robison, oversaw the evolution of skyscraper design on Toledo's Madison Avenue constructing the Ohio Building in 1906 and the Owens Illinois Building in 1929-30.

Throughout his life, Bill assembled an eclectic group of chosen family and friends and was a good friend to many. This is a testament to his generosity of spirit in his willingness to share his knowledge, skills, time, talents, and opinions with others. Those who mourn his passing are in the hundreds. Bill touched the lives of many during his time on earth and we will never truly know how many people he touched throughout his life.

Bill is survived by his sister, Eleanor Seymour Robison, San Francisco, his niece, Anita Greer Kasch, and nephew, Edward Jacobs Kasch, both of Oregon State.

A Celebration of Life for Bill will be held on April 3, 2022 at the Valentine Theater from 1pm - 5pm. Doors will open at 12:15 and the service starts at 1pm. There will be food, beverages and entertainment. Memorials may be made to Hospice of Northwest Ohio, Wood County Committee on Aging, Toledo Buffalo Soldiers MC, Inc.

The Coyle Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements. Please view the online guest registry at CoyleFuneralHome.com.

Cemetery Details

Woodlawn

1502 W Central Ave
Toledo, OH 43606

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

APR **3**. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Valentine Theater
401 Adams St.
Toledo, OH 43604

Memorial Service

APR **3**. 1:00 PM (ET)

Valentine Theater
401 Adams St.
Toledo, OH 43604

Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful in Blue* was purchased for the family of Willard Denison Robison.



April 02, 2022 at 02:30 AM



“ *The Craig Family* purchased the *Reflections of Glory Wreath* for the family of Willard Denison Robison.



The Craig Family - March 30, 2022 at 02:32 PM



“ *Huntington Center & Glass City Center* purchased the *Peaceful White Lilies Basket* for the family of Willard Denison Robison.



Huntington Center & Glass City Center - March 29, 2022 at 08:52 AM

DW

“ I first met Bill in the mid 70s, when he was sound engineer for a 3 man band known as "Raw Power". I was doing sound work primarily at UT at that time and his band would occasionally play in what was then known as the "Rathskellar" in the Student Union. We became friends and often co-operated and collaborated on shows at UT, first at the old field house and student union, and later at Centennial Hall where i oversaw concert technical production for its first 4 1/2 years. Bill had started GL Sound by then and I would often use him as an extremely reliable resource for equipment and knowledge. I eventually moved on to an engineering career of a different kind, but would occasionally be tapped for local event stage and production management, and Bill and GLS were always there as a great resource.

More recently, when I was asked to be on Promedica's committee coordinating the redevelopment of Promenade Park, I suggested that Bill be brought in to provide his expert perspective on staging, sound and lighting. He also was engaged to assist in the specification of sound and video equipment for the huge video display on the upper level of the park.

He was an incredible technical resource for the community and I was proud to be a friend of his over the years. His legacy in the concert/event production industry carries on with the company he founded which continues to be the premier provider of production systems for all kinds of events in NW Ohio.

Don Warner

Don Warner - March 27, 2022 at 12:08 PM

“ I’ve considered Bill one of my dearest friends for nearly five decades. In the mid-seventies I was one of his first “roadies”, helping him schlep his sound gear into and out of numerous night clubs, dive bars, and cavernous cheap venues, back when it all fit in his Dodge van. He was a dear friend of my entire family, having been one of my older brother David’s good friends in their fifth and sixth grade years. Bill was close with my mother, who trusted him enough to let me work on gigs until 3am, (sometimes even on school nights), before I was 18 years old.

Bill introduced me to some of the best music I’d had ever heard, and on the most amazing equipment I’d ever seen. We saw many concerts together, from the first line-up of John McLaughlin Mahavishnu Orchestra, through Pink Floyd’s Dark Side of the Moon tour and ELP, to Carlos Santana.

I’ve posted a picture of him the way I will always remember him, selecting an LP from his extensive collection, in his apartment on Scottwood.

I moved to California when I was 19, but we always kept in touch. We had many terrific visits -- while Bill was on business travel to the west coast, and when visiting his family in Portland, he always made time to meet with me.

I will miss our many long phone conversations, his biting sarcasm, quick wit, and unique humor.

We say this about most people we’ve lost, but Bill truly was one of a kind.

Up on the hill
People never stare
They just don’t care
Chinese music under banyan trees
Here at the dude ranch above the sea

~ Aja – Steely Dan



Russell Martin - March 25, 2022 at 07:28 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Willard Denison Robison.*



March 25, 2022 at 06:23 PM



“ *Bill was a legend in Toledo. I met him while I was a student employee at the UT student union. He and his entire staff were a great resource for the events we worked on. He will be greatly missed by all those who had the honor of knowing him.*

jeff moss - March 25, 2022 at 04:53 PM



Rest in Peace Bill as you listen to music eternally.

Melyssa Sexton - March 25, 2022 at 07:34 PM



Half the fun of renting gear at Great Lakes Sound was knowing I'd have the opportunity to chat with Bill. Sad to think I'll never have that chance again.

Steve Israel - March 26, 2022 at 04:32 PM