

The Sparkle and Passion of ‘Uncle Bill’

Submitted by Melanie Allen-Lowry and Fred Smith

Bill Richardson, who served as Florida’s North District State Coordinator for AFA passed away July 14, 2010. His lifelong passion of Aviculture started when his father, a cattle rancher, designated 20 acres of their Central Florida ranch as “protected” for the sake of a large flock of nesting Sand Hill Cranes. Still a young boy, Bill was given his first exotic bird, a parakeet that soon became the “light of his life,” to ease the pain of his mother’s death.

After his formal education and more than 22 years in the U.S. Navy, he opened a new chapter in his life in 1985 by purchasing what he called a ‘real’ parrot—a 10-day-old Sun Conure that he learned to hand feed and care for; and soon to follow an insatiable quest for learning and dedication to conservation and aviculture. In addition to six or seven specialty clubs, and attending numerous seminars in the United States as well as Canada, he was an active member in AFA since 1992. Bill’s true love centered on conures, especially the *Pyrhura* genus.

Bill, known by many in the avian community as “Uncle Bill” touched us all with his great passion of life as he shared his stories of Navy life, the best places for “real good food” in Florida, and of course, his vast avicultural knowledge. He was the information data for the avian community as Jennifer Trescastros explains, “Bill was always ‘in the know.’ He kept everyone



updated on upcoming shows, seminars and events. He could find what you were looking for at the price you wanted to pay. He knew everyone who was anyone in the bird business, what their specialty

was, and had valid phone numbers for them. It only occurred to me after Bill died that he had single-handedly become the “Facebook of aviculturists.”

I remember when I asked Bill if he would be my North Florida State Coordinator. His face lit up and he enthusiastically replied, “yes!” He truly supported AFA and couldn’t wait for the next Convention.

In the autobiography Bill submitted for his position as Florida North District State Coordinator for AFA, he added..., “I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that while most of us care for our birds and their welfare, and take pride in producing quality babies for the buying public, we all have two extremely important jobs: that of promoting conservation, and public education.” With that said, Uncle Bill’s mark on aviculture should be his legacy that inspires the entire avian community.