



Garry Lee Harrison

August 16, 1954 - September 4, 2012

BLOOMINGTON, IN - Garry Lee Harrison, 58, a native of Coles County, Illinois, passed away peacefully in his sleep on September 4, 2012 in his home in Bloomington, Indiana.

He was born August 16, 1954 in Charleston, to Clifford O. and Pauline (Mason) Harrison.

Garry was a 1972 graduate of Charleston High School. In his teens he learned to play fiddle from his father, a passion that he pursued throughout his lifetime. In addition to playing the fiddle, he also taught himself to build fiddles and other stringed instruments. He collected and restored a complete catalog of autoharps and fretless zithers, then donated that collection to the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.

In his adult life, Garry made his living working in the building trades until he accepted a position at Indiana University Libraries in 1998. In 2000, he became Head of the General Conservation unit of the E. Lingle Craig Preservation Lab at Indiana University.

In the 1970s, Garry began collecting and recording old-time music from senior musicians in Illinois which resulted in a collection that is housed in the Library of Congress and also in a book titled Dear Old Illinois.

In 1981, Garry's band, The Indian Creek Delta Boys, was named the

'Official State of Illinois Traditional Old-Time String Band' by act of the 82nd General Assembly of the State of Illinois. Most recently, Garry played fiddle with the New Mules, a five-member string band that included his daughter Genevieve on fiddle and her husband Smith Koester on banjo. This band received a blue ribbon in the traditional stringband contest at the Appalachian String Band Music Festival in West Virginia in 2008.

He recorded a number of LPs and CDs including "Late for the Dance," "Red Prairie Dawn" (which consisted almost entirely of his own original fiddle tunes) and "Pride of America." Survivors include his daughter Genevieve (Harrison) Koester and her husband, Smith of Chicago, Genevieve's mother, Gaye Harrison of Charleston, Illinois; twin brother Terry, and nephew Clifford Harrison of Charleston, Illinois; brother Steve and Linda (Catalana) Harrison and niece Molly (Harrison) Keene of St. Albans, West Virginia; and longtime friend and musical collaborator Jo Burgess of Bloomington, Indiana.

A memorial service will take place in the near future in Charleston, Illinois.

Donations to fund an old-time music scholarship can be made out to Pick Away Press, P.O. Box 7102, Bloomington, IN 47407.

Allen Funeral Home 4155 South Old Highway 37 is handling the arrangements and online condolences may be sent to the family at www.allenfuneralhome.org.

Tribute Wall

TO

“ Oh my! What a terrible loss!

I always thought that I'd get to play music with Garry again, sometime. Garry was 'way bigger than he was given credit for. The music he collected from old timers (Boinkers) put Allen Lomax to shame. And he was better than all of them put together. All I have to do is close my eyes and I can still hear his fiddle.

*Good bye, Garry,
Tom Phipps*

Tom Phipps - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

DA

“ *My heart and thoughts go out to you. I worked at the Preservation lab with Garry 2003-2006 and cannot imagine the world without his bombastic spirit in it.*

Danielle Creech - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

LI

“ *My thoughts and love to all Garry's family and friends. I worked with him at the Preservation Lab for a long time, and I am forever grateful to the creative legacy he handed down to me. And for teaching me that having a big heart never goes out of style. It is my honor to travel back to the Midwest to pay my respects.*

Lillie Crow - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

ST

“ Genevieve I am so sorry for the loss of your Father. I know what you are going through. You and your family are in My prayers and Thoughts

God Bless

Stan

Stan Young - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

NI

“ Thinking of Genevieve and all of the family at this difficult time. May you cherish the fond memories.

Nicole Brown - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

JE

“ Sad to hear. Missed Garry at the 40th. class reunion in June. Rest in Peace.

Jeffery Cougill - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

DS

“ Genevieve I'm so sorry for your lost, just know you and your family we be in my thoughts and prayers.

David Slatton - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

LY

“ Genevieve you and your family are in the prayers of me and my family...I'm so sorry to hear of your loss...Death is so hard because it's unnatural. The Bible give hope and comfort to endure.
Lynetta

Lynetta Smith - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

TO

“ Terry,
I've thought of you two often over the years and cherish the time I spent with you and Garry.

My sincerest condolence,

Todd(Foggy)Waddell and family

Todd Waddell - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

WF

“ *The heart grieves but the soul rejoices for the dancers finding partners on the stardust floor, while Garry rosins up a hoedown or saws into a waltz or shuffles through a schottische at the moonlit barnyard standing-room-only forever dance.*

Thanks for the tunes, for the music, for passion for Midwest music.

William Furry - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

CA

“ *Gen, you have my deepest sympathy. I am sending prayers for you strength during this difficult time.*

Cassandra

Cassandra Giles - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

CH

“ *Scurv & Terry: My condolences for the loss of your brother. I have fond memories of the music he made.*

Chris Pollard - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

BM

“ *Condolences to the Garry Harrison Family from his cousin Bruce Mason & Bonnie Mason & Family from Arcola,IL*

Bruce Mason - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM

JC

“ *I am very sad to hear about Gary I just seen him at the Campbell Center in August for a special collection book work shop,I was so happy to see Gary loved talking to him.I took one of his work shops at the Campbell Center in 2007 and we sat down stairs and he played his fiddle what a great teacher and fiddle player, and I am sure a great father. So Sorry...*

Jeffrey c Gilboe - October 26, 2015 at 04:15 PM