



Thomas Bruce Carpenter Jr.

February 13, 1942 - November 13, 2016

Thomas Bruce Carpenter, Jr., was born in New Castle, Pa., on February 13, 1942, just an hour or so away from being the Valentine's baby his mother had anticipated. He grew up in Youngstown, Ohio, but fondly remembered being a six-year-old living in Canada and playing in the snow with his brother and his parents. Most of all, however, he looked forward to spending time at his maternal grandparents' home in Poland, Ohio. Throughout his life his grandmother, Nelle Foster Mitchell, and grandfather, Osborne Mitchell, remained emotionally and intellectually nurturing. Like his grandfather, he was drawn to family history and began to explore places where ancestors had lived and to write stories about them. [L L L] [SEP SEP] After a couple of years in high school in Youngstown (where football was a favorite pastime and teammates remained life-long friends), he graduated from Mercersburg Academy in Pennsylvania in 1960. He earned a B.A. in English Literature in 1964 at Washington and Jefferson College, a small men's college at the time in Washington, Pa. His maternal grandfather had also graduated from W&J. On Sundays, Bruce visited close relatives who still lived in town. He often recalled the literature professors in high school and college who introduced him to the wonders of Chaucer and pleasures of Latin (which served him well when he subsequently began to learn Spanish and Portuguese). [L L L] [SEP SEP] Having completed ROTC training in college, he was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the U.S. Army and stationed at Ft. Sill in Lawton, Oklahoma, where he served until December 1966. [L L L] [SEP SEP] On a Friday the 13th in 1964,

Bruce met Inta Gale on a blind date arranged by two of their friends who trusted in their match-making skills. On September 24, 2016, Bruce and Inta celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

[L
SEP] Despite Bruce's absorption with the humanities, his first job after leaving the army was as an industrial engineer at CF&I Steel, where his paternal grandfather had been superintendent decades earlier. In 1968, however, Bruce turned back to literature and began graduate studies in Medieval English at Indiana University.

After completing an M.A., he accepted a position at Southeast Community College in Cumberland, Kentucky. In addition to teaching literature courses there for two years, he also became advisor to student editors of the college newspaper. Subsequently, this new interest sparked a career in book design and composition which immersed him in the challenges and pleasures of words and aesthetics for the rest of his life. He combined work as a compositor with farming, after he and Inta bought a 150-year-old log house on 21 acres outside of Bloomington, Indiana, in 1974. In 1978, Inta's parents bought a nearby farm and soon they all were working together to tend large gardens, grow alfalfa and corn, raise a few head of cattle, feed chickens and a couple of pigs, and enjoy two horses. They lived in the country for 14 years with their two children, Alexander Ian, born on June 21, 1969, and Eleanor Aimee, born January 4, 1972. Like their father, both children spent happy hours with their grandparents, where love and good food were equally abundant.

Bruce was a devoted member of St. Mark's United Methodist Church, where he served on the Peace with Justice committee and particularly enjoyed sharing ideas with kindred souls in the New Nomads group and with the men in Conversations on Life. St. Mark's also led him to Habitat for Humanity. In 1988, he joined other volunteers to begin building homes in Monroe County, and throughout the 1990s, he served as a Habitat board member, including

two terms as president. St. Mark's also provided Bruce with the opportunity to visit inmates in Monroe County through a "jail-bingo ministry" and to help with the Interfaith Emergency Winter Shelter program for the homeless in Bloomington.

Bruce is survived by his wife, Inta Gale Carpenter, his mother-in-law, Austra Anna Pinkis, his son, Alexander Ian Carpenter (and wife Adrienne Daibert), his daughter, Eleanor Aimee Carpenter (and husband Cory Whitehead), and his grandchildren, Izabella Daibert Carpenter, Gabriel Daibert Carpenter, Soren William Whitehead, and James Mitchell Whitehead. He was preceded in death by his brother, Howard Bruce Carpenter, who died on March 6, 1967, serving as a Green Beret in the Vietnam war.

A memorial service will take place on Saturday, December 17, 2016, at 2:00PM at St Mark's United Methodist Church in Bloomington. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County (<https://monroecountyhabitat.org/>) or St. Mark's Methodist Church (<http://stmarksbloomington.org/>). You are invited to share a memory or leave online condolences at www.allencares.com.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

DEC 17 (ET)

St Marks United Methodist Church
100 State Rd 46
Bloomington, IN 47408

Tribute Wall



“ *Dear Ina,
I am so sorry to just hear of Bruce's passing. I have been remiss in my sporadic past efforts to contact Bruce. He and I, along with Bill Speer and other new lieutenants, shared a great relationship at Ft. Sill in the pre-war peace time Army. I was amazed but not surprised at his life achievements described in the Obituary. Bruce was definitely the intellectual of our group; but, he was also a wonderful and crazy guy who led us on some memorable adventures. I very well remember you and the beautiful wedding I attended as one of the Groomsman. I still have the pewter mug which Bruce gave me. If you receive this late post and perhaps want to hear some old war stories, please send an email to: fogarty326@aol.com.
Mike Fogarty.*

Michael Fogarty - October 14, 2018 at 11:12 PM



“ *White Sympathy Baskets was purchased for the family of Thomas Bruce Carpenter Jr..*



December 16, 2016 at 04:47 PM

JL

“ Despite the fact that we rarely saw each other after I moved to Washington State, Brucie remained one of my dearest old friends & it was great to see him when he came out here to visit his daughter Aimee. I have a lot of memories of good times at the farm on Prather Road, summer parties, our daughters growing up together, & lots, lots more. My love goes out to Inta (also a dear old friend), Aimee, & Alex. Sharon sends her love & sympathy too.

Jens Lund - November 30, 2016 at 09:13 PM

RV

“ It was during grad school at IU that I met Bruce and Inta, and through events related to the Folklore Institute and Baltic student gatherings, I was fortunate to experience what a unique guy Bruce was. It doesn't sound like much, but I will always return to that day when Bruce and I spent a cold fall morning chopping fire wood for their log cabin. That was the kind of 'hanging-out' where guys slowly get to know each other. And so, a few years ago, while visiting Bloomington, I met Bruce. He had just finished a few hours visiting with inmates at the city jail. Of course, what else. That was Bruce. Always giving, always concerned about the other guy. That was stature, and a model for the rest of us.

My deepest sorrow goes out to you Inta.

Richard Vidutis - November 22, 2016 at 11:57 AM

AS

“ Bruce was a great mentor and friend to me and shared his family circle with our family. He will be sorely missed, set an example of patience, kindness and willingness to share his wisdom.

Addie Seabarkrob - November 21, 2016 at 07:38 AM



“ Dear Inta and Family,
We are so sorry to learn of Bruce's illness and passing. He was such a great man; so sweet and always ready with a smile and kind word. We are keeping you all very close in our hearts and thoughts. We love you. Celeste and Mike

Celeste McGregor - November 21, 2016 at 06:59 AM



“ I didn't know Bruce for that long of a time, but in the years we shared (probably 4), I found him to be such an interesting, involved, and outgoing personality. We shared a little in common when I learned he had served in Southeast Kentucky for several years (where I had been for many more years). I enjoyed his stories of Latvia and his wife's family, and he so looked forward to that recent visit. In our "book study", Bruce was always one to "get us back on track" and urge us to really study the book before us, rather than engage in chit-chat! His presence always enlivened the group, though he was unassuming and never sought to bring attention to himself. My last contact was about a new Latvian I met that had recently arrived in town; Bruce told me how to connect with him and other Latvians. He was that kind of a "good-deed" doer, always helpful, gentle, and showing good judgment and understanding. He was, in fact, a very good Christian, and for that I will especially remember him.

Timothy Jessen - November 20, 2016 at 07:53 PM