

## EULOGY for Bud Pazur

Written and delivered by Denise Pazur on 18 Jan 2024

“Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body.

But rather to skid in broadside, in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming "Wow! What a Ride!"

These words are from writer Hunter S. Thompson. But Bud could have written them.

He wrote a lot over his years. Bud kept a journal throughout his life. He wrote poetry and prose. He was a prolific writer.

Then in 2022 before he was ill, instead of writing, he told me about his life and I audiotaped him. I asked him questions like...

- “What was the happiest time in your life?”
- “Do you think you were ever too hard on yourself?”
- “What’s one thing in your life that you simply can NOT live without?”

I learned a lot, more than I’d known in the 44 years we’d been together.

Bud told me how back in the ‘70s he drove his Datsun into Manhattan from New Jersey where he was living then. He talked about driving aggressively against New York cabbies. Maybe that’s how he honed his road racing skills for later in life.

In the City Bud would drift around low-rent districts—the East Village, Harlem, the Cloisters. He just got lost. He’d people-watch, take photos, listen to music, and soak up the vibe. He called it “slumming” because a beer was eight dollars back then, and he couldn’t afford that or even a five dollar cup of coffee.

Bud was a “car guy” from the get-go. His dad worked in the western Pennsylvania steels mills so he wouldn’t even *think* of buying a car that was NOT made in America.

But not so for his son. Bud bought his first car in 1966...a Triumph TR-3. British made. His dad said: “Why the heck did you buy that? You’re not going to get any help from me if you bought that foreign piece of junk.” So Bud maintained the TR-3 all by himself.

That was the thing about Bud. When he set his mind to something, he found a way to do it. Even if he'd never tried it before...like building a double garage or installing a wood stove—which meant he had to learn how to be a bricklayer.

To fuel the stove, Bud chain sawed more than a few 80-foot oak trees on our property. He never worried about a tree falling the wrong way and landing on our house. After all, he WAS an ENGINEER. He knew what he was doing.

Bud was blessed with a brilliant mind. He'd would talk about the Higgs boson, the hadron collider, Plato's definition of reality as the duality of body and the mind. And about the field of consciousness—how energy given to it is the field that produces us as homo sapiens. His thoughts were mind-bending. Especially for me, who had little exposure to this sort of thing.

A few weeks ago I talked to Bud's high-school friend Larry. They both played trombone in the band, and formed a garage band back in their teens.

Larry couldn't believe Bud's ability to earn a degree in physics at Penn State...and THEN go on to get a master's in chemical engineering. You just DON'T do that, he told me, especially at an esteemed school like Carnegie Mellon.

But Bud was unassuming about this achievement. He told me how after he got his undergrad, he started his master's in physics at Cincinnati, but couldn't handle the math. So, he just went to Carnegie Mellon instead for a master's in Chem E. He claimed to have "bluffed his way through it," which was NOT the case.

What was Bud at his essence? Quiet—until you got to know him. But funny as all get-out. A gentle soul who loved cats. A rebel and a story teller...He told me how one time he came home from college to visit his parents: "I wasn't wearing a wristwatch," he said. "And I asked someone what time it was because I wanted to know the time for some reason. And my dad said, "Why don't you have a wristwatch?" And I said "because I don't like wearing a CLOCK on my BODY." His dad got so mad and told him, "You're WEIRD, Bud."

Bud WAS different. He'd be the first to admit that. In the 1970s he dreamed of leaving engineering to be a roadie for the Grateful Dead. Seriously. He even wrote a "to do" list—on GAF company letterhead—on how he'd work toward that goal, one step at a time. He saved that list for 50 years and I still have it.

But Bud was also committed. When he made a promise, he followed through. Like going to work every day, to an engineering job that he excelled at, but was sometimes less than enthusiastic about. Why? To support his family. Bud took this role seriously. It's like his dad always said: "A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do." And Bud certainly did.

He seized life for all it was worth. He always had the pedal to the metal, figuratively AND literally, just like Hunter Thompson.

So...how did Bud answer those questions I asked him?

- “I was happiest when my son was born,” he told me without hesitation.
- Did Bud demand too much of himself? “Always,” he said. “I had to prove myself by making very good grades, but mostly I lived a life that was secret. The other kids on the playground were normal guys, and I was different. I didn’t know how or why, but I was different from them. I read books, I read Einstein. How could I talk to any of those ‘normal’ kids about Einstein and the Bible?”
- Finally, what’s the one thing throughout the course of Bud’s life that he simply couldn’t live without? MUSIC.

Last August when the doctors told Bud he had cancer, sure, he was scared. But he was philosophical too. “Everybody’s got to die sometime,” he told me and his siblings.

Those last four months with Bud were a tremendous gift—to me and to him, I think. He noticed more of the beauty around him—the vivid shades of green in a farmer’s field. The live music we heard at the Water Street Pub. The old Christmas ornaments we decorated a tree with, just a month before he died.

As I look back now, one thing’s crystal clear to me: **Bud showed us how to live and how to die...with courage, with dignity, and with grace.**

Shortly before he passed, Bud told me he was going away with our son and his parents. “I’ve got to get up,” he insisted. “I’ve got to get my shoes on. I’m going on a trip with Steve, and mom and dad.” These were among his last words.

December 19 was Bud’s day to begin that trip with his son. It was long-awaited, as they had spent 23 years apart.

You know, Bud’s dad would often say, “When it’s time to go, it’s time to go.”

For Bud, December 19 was most certainly his time to go.

And for those of us left behind, who are lucky enough to have known Bud, we are most certainly all the better for it.