

In Memory of Squire

July 29, 1948 - June 29, 2011



Maybe only a gypsy would know a life like James (Squire) Burke did; a man knowing the road for millions of miles and twice as many faces. He is among few to have recorded 1 Million miles on a Harley. (He should have held a record for the hair he pulled to one side and wore down to his ankles).

Squire's goal was to add up all those miles on one bike, his blue '94 Tour Glide! Having this accomplishment under his belt, a new goal had been set, to defeat cancer and ride again. He unfortunately fell victim to brain cancer in November 2010 and passed away here in Phoenix on June 29, 2011.

My Daddy (Waldo) and I met Squire while we were "Ridin and writin" at an event out of state way back in the early 90's. We all were out going and each of us desired to meet new people. This began a lifelong friendship. We rode many a mile and met so many new faces together. Parts, of UGLY MC, celebrity and close friend has said, "Squire has introduced me to some of the most interesting people." He went on to say that, "Squire got some of the most unique people together and I knew a lot of people because of him." Personally, in my time knowing him I never thought of Squire as a biker. I thought of him more of like a hippy, actually.

This was a man who led the life, never cut his hair and rode his motorcycle not just for transportation but more of something he loved (Hippy right?). He knew the ins and outs of his bike ~ all the facts were in his head as if he was keeping track of his own health. Repairs were usually done himself unless someone offered. Keeping as many friends as he did, he was frequently offered gifts, such as necessities, jewelry, and trinkets to add to his bike or parts to replace. Least forgotten, was this little skull horn that, when squeezed, you heard the high pitched "chuga" sound. He had received anything from shoes to fenders. As gifts, this added a special memory to them, and gave him yet another story to tell. Oddly, the only cash he carried (never owned a credit card) went to insurance or into his gas tank.

Anytime he was on his bike he wore his old civil war leather riding hat he was given, leather shirt with his mileage patches down the sleeve, jeans, and a comfy pair of black slip on tennis shoes. Although, when it was hot, he rode shirtless and always kept a deep tan. But don't forget the tan line left on his forehead from that old leather hat.

In the travels we have shared, he carried these homemade stickers "have squire will travel" or

"There are no ugly women with a light switch". He would stick these to the back of road signs just to leave a mark. Then there were times when I needed a bathroom and Squire would ride circles in the parking lot while I dilly-dallied.

Memory serves, a long ride took us up to north east AZ on a desolate 2-lane highway. Of course, Dad and I broke down. We eventually fixed ourselves and made it to a little shack of a place with a pay phone outside. Squire had parked his bike in such a way that as the sun set over a mountain peak behind him, the rays seems to beam off of him. It made for an amazing one of a kind picture. He made his way to the phone (since he never carried a cell). That call he made was to the only lady I have ever known

him to have as his partner, Laura. Our breakdown delayed his 6pm phone call (Detroit time). At this point it was 6pm (AZ time). Not hearing from him for 3 hours, she was hysterical. Apparently, she heard a rumor that he had been in an accident and died. This made for a much longer pit stop than my rebellious bathroom breaks. Later, we ended up at a friend's for dinner and filled our bellies, then fell asleep to the Detroit Red Wings hockey game on TV. This was a day in the life of Squire. Ridin', making memories, enjoying time with friends, a good dinner, and keeping tabs on his favorite team.

Squire spent a good part of the year in either Arizona or California with close friends. The other part of the year was spent crossing the country or in Michigan, where he spent time with his club (Road Agents MC) and more close friends. In his travels he always had a place to stay without fail. In MI, our



Betsy & Bruce met up with Squire for what would be the last time at CycleFest 2010

friend Mark Jedele, who rode with Squire thru about 20 states, welcomed him in for many summers. "We have ridden together over tens of thousands of miles and he has even helped me chop wood for the winters, believe it or not..." Mark said.

Many times when Squire was in AZ, he would disappear to CA for dinner at Oliver's house; and he never missed a Love Ride event. In Feb of 2000 my dad bought a brand new Road Glide from Oliver. Not having the sidecar yet, Squire volunteered me and himself to fly out and pick up the bike. Off we went. At the time, I felt that was the longest and coldest ride I had ever been on. Making things worse for me, we got pulled over, and Squire talked his way out of a ticket with another "awesome" story ~ while I sat on the back seat shivering my tail off.

We finally made it back (in 6 hours), so relieved to be home. Daddy was pleased to see his new bike and Squire was content with the meal waiting for him. I must say that this was the first trip I did not complain to stop for a bathroom.

I for one am happy to have shared so many memories and have known that long-haired hippy man most of my life. I now take comfort in knowing that Squire is ridin' in Heaven on an endless scenic road, with the countless enthusiasts before him.

Charity,
Waldo's daughter

