

**William Kautzer(1954 - 2015)**

Kautzer, William "Bill"

William "Bill" Kautzer transitioned peacefully at home January 11, 2015 into the arms of the Lord after an 8 year battle for life with brain cancer. Bill was surrounded by those who loved him most, his wife and three daughters.

A memorial service will be held at 11 AM Thursday at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Nekoosa. Rev. Carl Kummer will officiate. Burial will be in Riverside Cemetery in Nekoosa. There will be no visitation. Feldner/Ritchay Funeral Home of Nekoosa is assisting the family.

Bill Kautzer was born December 15, 1954 in Wisconsin Rapids to Alexander and Mary Kautzer. He married the love of his life and best friend, Nancy (Thompson) Kautzer on December 29, 1973. They were blessed to have 41 years together and three beautiful daughters, Sasha (Cary) Anderson, Gabrielle (Tom) Koren and Courtney (Andrew) Berg.

Bill attended Nekoosa High School, graduating in May, 1973. Immediately upon graduation from high school, Bill was drafted as a pitcher by the Chicago White Sox organization in the 4th round. He played professional baseball from 1973 to 1977. During the off season, he attended the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. He graduated from Mid-State Technical College in Marshfield and completed the police cadet program at the Wausau campus. He was employed by the Nekoosa Police Department for 26 years. In 2006, Bill was forced to retire from the job he so loved due to his illness. At that time, he was Assistant [Police Chief](#) and the Nekoosa Schools Liaisons Officer. He was known to all Nekoosa youth as "Officer Bill" and served as a powerful and positive role model and mentor in many of the youths' lives. His amazing personality and genuine perspectives on life were contagious. Boyd Campbell, a former Nekoosa Principal stated, "Bill's wonderful attitude and tremendous sense of humor was known by all. Nekoosa students so much needed a powerful and positive role model as "Bill Kautzer" in their lives. Bill will fondly be remembered by the youth for his many safety programs, bike rodeos, electric car safety town, little convincer seat belt rides, and donation of countless bikes and helmets to the students throughout the years. But more importantly, he will be remembered for his genuine concern and the personal connections he made with so many youth.

His commitment to the youth of the community extended far beyond his work setting. He coached 9-12 year old girls softball for 9 years and girl's 9-12 bantam basketball teams for 8 years. He was the Nekoosa High School varsity softball coach for 8 years. During the time of coaching varsity softball, he raised the money to refurbish and update the girl's softball field, build a concession stand and buy all new softball uniforms and gear. This is how Bill was described by Vicki (Knipple) Oleson one of his former softball players. "When I think of Bill Kautzer, I think of a devoted role model, one who believed in people's abilities and highlighted on them. One who can guide others in a funny yet disciplined way, remain enthusiastic and positive, and in turn, make others believe in themselves and succeed."

Bill strongly believed in volunteerism and commitment to the community. He served as a board member for the Community Foundation of South Wood County (Encourage) from 2000-2003. He was a former Nekoosa Lions member. He was a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church where he taught Vacation Bible School, was a church choir member and led the Wednesday night teen bible study group with his wife. Bill was a member of the fundraising committee for the Nekoosa Community Center. Even in his last declining days, his compassion for youth of our community continued as a member of the fundraising committee for the future Nekoosa Youth Skate Park.

Bill's greatest compassion and commitment however, was for his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and his family; wife Nancy, his three daughters and his four grandchildren (Emma, Eli, Will and Aivit). Bill dedicated his life to insure the happiness of his wife, daughters and later his grandchildren.

Bill is also survived by his mother, Mary Kautzer; mother in-law, Germaine Thompson; brothers Richard (Sandy) Kautzer, Mike (Kathy) Kautzer; sisters, Jeannie (David) Brody, DeAnnie (Adam) Reeder; sister in-laws, Vicki (Jim) Herzberg, Becky (John) Gabor, Drs. Julie (Jeff) Dobkin, brother in-law, Dr. Michael (Jean) Thompson and many very special nieces and nephews who loved their "Uncle Bill" very much. He was preceded in death by his father, Alexander Kautzer and father in-law, Dr. John Thompson.

The family would like to thank all the staff at UW-Cancer Center, especially Dr. Kirschling, Dr. Anna Olson, niece Marilyn, Nikki, Mary Schwanebeck, and Mary Merden. From the Riverview Family Clinic, Dr. Estrada and Cindy. Also thanks to Marshfield Clinic, especially Dr. Lawler and Tammy, Cindy, and Scott in Radiology, and finally Roberta and staff of Ministry Hospice Care. And thanks also to dear friends for their support in these last difficult days - Pastor Carl Kummer, Jim Mathias and Joan Winkler.

Stuart Scott said it best, "When you die it does not mean that you lose to cancer. You beat cancer by how you lived." Bill

truly lived his last 8 years of life and was able to be a part of memories that will be cherished forever; traveling with his wife, walking his three daughters down the aisle to marriage, and witnessing the births of his four grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers a memorial for Bill will be established at Paper City Savings in Nekoosa to benefit the youth of the community.

Online condolences may be expressed at [ritchayfuneralhome.com](http://ritchayfuneralhome.com).

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