



## Marlyn Cletus Huiras

April 24, 1934 - December 29, 2014

Huiras, Marlyn (Marly) Cletus - For 80 years, Marly Huiras lived a full life as an artist, sportsman, writer, humorist, naturalist, actor, and so much more. He was equally robust as a father. Marly's children are Christopher Huiras, M.D., Julie Huiras Mascitti, Patti LaPorte, Lisa Leuker, and Abby Alexander, all living in Wisconsin.

Marly was born on April 24, 1934, near Springfield, Minn., the only child of Phyllis (Gilbertson) Huiras and Cletus Huiras, and died unexpectedly of natural causes on Dec. 29, 2014, at his home near Dodgeville, Wis.

He spent his childhood in Sleepy Eye, Minn., and his high school years in St. Cloud, Minn. (Cathedral High, Class of 1952). After playing professional baseball in the New York Yankees farm system, Marly returned to St. Cloud and joined Fandel's Department Store as the visual merchandiser, developing his natural talent as an artist-designer.

The Huiras family moved to Madison in 1963 when Marly was named advertising manager for Marshall Erdmann & Associates and began a lifelong career in the field of advertising and public relations. Later he worked as director of creative services at Ray-O-Vac, and, later still, owned The Sun Group Consortium, serving clients with his keen marketing, writing, and graphic design skills.

Marly's avocation as an actor with The Madison Theatre Guild during its musical theater heyday was another reason he loved his adopted city. His lead roles in *The King & I*, *South Pacific*, and *Count Dracula* showcased Marly's onstage talents.

In retirement, Marly designed, built, and loved his rural home, always a changing canvas, which eventually evolved into a workshop, art studio, and gallery. Its nearby woods and fields were the sites of many family and friends hunting trips, hikes, conservation work, campouts, and the occasional elaborate croquet tournament. Marly's artwork often reflected his lifelong study of Native American culture. He leaves behind a treasured collection of illustrations, beadwork, paintings, and musings written in his distinctive hand.

Marly was an avid baseball player, coach, fan, and student of the game. In addition to the Yanks, he played for home talent and rec teams, and donned caps in support of the Sleepy Eye Indians, Minnesota Twins, Milwaukee Brewers, Beloit College Buccaneers, and numerous Little League and high school teams.

Marly enthusiastically returned to live in Sleepy Eye in the 1990s, during his parents' final years, and stayed on in his hometown for a time following their deaths. His community involvement with the Sleepy Eye Indians amateur baseball team and local theater led to a state berth and a lavish production of *The Music Man*.

Each of Marly's 14 grandchildren was his favorite. Grandad's talents and abilities are evident in every one of them. His presence at their sporting, school, scout, and arts events was loyal and usually included a "helpful" review of the outcome. His grandchildren are Callie (Travas James and their daughter, Arianna), Kyle, and Hans Huiras; Eric (and wife Amy Baldukas);

Evan and Marco Mascitti; Dominick, Elise, and Michael LaPorte; Danielle and Erika Leuker; and Taylor, Jake, and Sophia Alexander.

Also surviving Marly are sons-in-law Jason Mascitti, Tom Leuker, and Andy Alexander, who were his fishing and bleacher buddies; daughter-in-law Krista Huiras, and her children Kyle, Chad, and Quin Coleman.

Marly and his former wife, Eileen Gilbert (Madison, Wis.), were married for many years and later cordially shared their children's and grandchildren's milestones.

Marly is further survived by a troupe of beloved cousins born in Brown County, Minn., including Mavis Davis, Dean Marks, and Dennis Marks; his aunt Birdie Gilbertson of Arkansaw, Wis.; excellent friend Dean Brinkmann and their Sleepy Eye Indians teammates in Sleepy Eye, Minn.; and an abundance of other friends, including those of his children and grandchildren. He also remained close with the extended Gilbert family in Minnesota, especially with Max Gilbert of Backus, Minn.

A memorial gathering will be held on Saturday, January 31, 2015, at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, 227 State Street, Madison, Wis. Visitation begins at 12:30 p.m. and the service will be held at 2 p.m., followed by a casual reception. A second memorial service will be held next summer (baseball season) in Sleepy Eye (details to be announced later).

Our family is grateful to UW Health doctors Lawrence Fleming (ret), David A. Erickson and John P. Heiner and their colleagues; and to Luanne and Steve Greenheck.

Memorials may be made to the The Marlyn Huiras Fund (c/o Chris Huiras,

N2175 Valley Road; LaCrosse, WI 54601), the Madison Central Library/Bubbler (201 W. Mifflin Street; Madison, WI 53703), or to your favorite hometown library, arts, or historic organization.

Our Dad endured disabling pain caused by severe arthritis. We joyfully imagine him now playing catch with his dad and a card game with his mom. Although we always miss him, we know the Huiras family is better for Marly's insight, commanding presence, and great big heart.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Marlyn Cletus Huiras*

November 15, 2022 at 06:49 AM



“ *Hello to all,*

*We are grateful for our Dad's life. During this past foggy week, your memories of him, and your care and concern, have buoyed us well. Thank you.*

*Love, Julie (Marly's favorite oldest daughter)*

**Julie Huiras Mascitti** - April 28, 2018 at 01:58 AM



“ *We are St.Cloud friends from long ago. Was in JC's with Marly and we enjoyed many social occasions together. We are sosorry and wish Eileen and family the best.Don and Jan WatkinsSt. Cloud/ Scottsdale,AZ*

April 28, 2018 at 01:58 AM



“ *Julie, I'm so very sorry for your loss. Please know that I am thinking of you and your family.Mary*

**Mary Cole** - April 28, 2018 at 01:58 AM

CF

“ So Sorry to hear of Marly's passing. I have great memories of us 5 Gilbert cousins piling into the station wagon and driving to Madison to visit the Huiras family and cousins and also all the good times our families had together at Webb Lake. We always loved spending time with you all and feel blessed for the times we had together. He was a great influence on a lot of people and will be missed tremendously.

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**Cindy Peppe and family** - April 28, 2018 at 01:58 AM

SG

“ *Marlyn Cletus Huiras*

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**Steve Greenheck** - April 28, 2018 at 01:58 AM

SS

“ *I will forever be grateful that we got to know Marlin Huiras. We enjoyed some wonderful times during his stay in Sleepy Eye. Most memorable was our summers as members of the Sleepy Eye Indians baseball team. So many fun times on the diamond. Marly gave our two daughters their first taste of theatre when he cast them as the Cratchit sisters in The Christmas Carol. He sparked for them a love of acting and live theatre that has carried them into their young adult lives. Even after he left Sleepy Eye he was always interested in what all three of our kids were up to. From time to time an email would pop up congratulating Judy and I when he was aware of one of their accomplishments. Even just a couple of months ago he congratulated us on our son David's football season, and offered some words of wisdom about possible college options. We are grateful that we knew Marlin, and we will miss him. Our condolences to the Huiras families. Scott & Judy Surprenant*

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**Scott Surprenant** - April 28, 2018 at 01:58 AM

“ I needed to post this article inspired by Marlyn and written local writer, Randy Krzmarzick in his bimonthly "Weeds" column. Here is the link and if permits the article too. For all to enjoy.  
<http://www.nujournal.com/page/content.detail/id/559320/You-collect-a-lot-of-regrets-in-life.html?nav=5237>

*I picked up my phone and saw I had a text and a voicemail from Dean Brinkman. Dean is one of my baseball buddies, and I figured this had to be big Twins news. They signed Max Scherzer?*

*I called, and the tone of his voice told me it was something more somber. Our friend Marlie Huiras had died at his home in Wisconsin. Marlie was 80 and had some small health problems, but his death was unexpected.*

*Marlie moved to Sleepy Eye in 1995 to be near his aging parents. He quickly jumped into the local community with both feet and was soon involved with the Community Theater, the Historical Society, and the local townball team.*

*I'm not even sure now which of those connected me with him. But he was a fascinating fellow with a wealth of experiences. His friends also discovered that he was a big kid inside. Dean called him "a 17-year old in an 80-year old's body!" Joking around with him could be a sophomoric, silly, and an utter joy.*

*When Dean gave me the news of his death, something clenched up inside of me. It wasn't the sadness that can wash over you at times like that. Marlie lived a full and complete life, active to the end. It occurred to me that I was feeling sorry for myself. I said to Dean, "I guess I won't be getting out to see him then, will I?"*

*Marlie moved back to Wisconsin in 2002, and I've been vowing to get out there to visit him ever since. He lived near Madison. We talked about going to a Brewers game and hanging out at the house he'd built on 40 acres for his retirement. There was never a perfect*

*time for me to go; now there won't be. The vague notion that I'll make a trip out there some day has been replaced by another regret in my life's holster.*

*It went in there next to this one: Last summer when I was in Georgia, my sister called to tell me that our uncle Linus died. Linus was 93. Like Marlie, he lived a full life. It was a quite different life, farming and raising a large family in Prairieville Township. He was probably my dad's best friend. When he talked with me, he had a way of making me feel like I was the most important person in his life right then.*

*Linus was in the nursing home his last years. I planned to go visit him there. No excuse, like having to drive to Wisconsin. All I had to do was drive to town. But I didn't, and I won't. In my mind there was always, "Later, later, later." It was another reminder that while our days can be long, the years go by quickly.*

*I know somewhere there is a pop psychologist saying we shouldn't hold on to regrets. But if it's all the same to him or her, I'll cling to these a little while. Do I feel bad? Yep. Should I? Yep.*

*It would be wonderful if we could get to the end of our life with no regrets. It would be great if on our death bed we could say, "Well, I got that all right." No, not going to see Marlie and Linus are things I regret. They are assuredly not the first things on that list either.*

*Regret is like guilt. It can be a bracing shot of cold air as you stumble out of your warm comfort zone. You don't want to be devastated by guilt, but a little can be a tool to use as you move forward with your life.*

*I was thinking about regrets. (What a perfect way to spend a miserable-cold January day.) Surprisingly few come from my marriage. We've had our share of tensions and conflict. But it seems like the need to look at each other every day forces us to resolve them one way or another. If the partners in a marriage can't learn to*

*forgive sometimes, forget other times, or just plain move on, you probably aren't going to stay married.*

*I have friends who are divorced. I wish I could say most split amicably. Rather, as they look back on that relationship, it is as if looking back on a battlefield. Regrets are there, like craters where the bombs fell, the field is pockma*

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**Dr. Dean Brinkman** - April 28, 2018 at 01:58 AM

AN

“ *It has been along time since I have seen Marly but he had a profound effect on my life. He was talented, witty, funny and special. I will never forget him.*

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**anonymous** - April 28, 2018 at 01:58 AM