

Garry Harrison

Aug. 16, 1954 - Sept. 4, 2012



BLOOMINGTON, IND. — Garry Lee Harrison, 58, a native of Coles County, Illinois, passed away peacefully in his sleep on September 4, 2012 in his home in Bloomington, Indiana.

He was born August 16, 1954 in Charleston, to Clifford O. and Pauline (Mason) Harrison.

Garry was a 1972 graduate of Charleston High School. In his teens he learned to play fiddle from his father, a passion that he pursued throughout his lifetime. In addition to playing the fiddle, he also taught himself to build fiddles and other stringed instruments. He collected and restored a complete catalog of autoharps and fretless zithers, then donated that collection to the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.

In his adult life, Garry made his living working in the building trades until he accepted a position at Indiana University Libraries in 1998. In 2000, he became Head of the General Conservation unit of the E. Lingle Craig Preservation Lab at Indiana University.

In the 1970s, Garry began collecting and recording old-time music from senior musicians in Illinois which resulted in a collection that is housed in the Library of Congress and also in a book titled *Dear Old Illinois*.

In 1981, Garry's band, The Indian Creek Delta Boys, was named the 'Official State of Illinois Traditional Old-Time String Band' by act of the 82nd General Assembly of the State of Illinois.

Most recently, Garry played fiddle with the New Mules, a five-member string band that included his daughter Genevieve on fiddle and her husband Smith Koester on banjo. This band received a blue ribbon in the traditional stringband contest at the Appalachian String Band Music Festival in West Virginia in 2008.

He recorded a number of LPs and CDs including "Late for the

Dance," "Red Prairie Dawn" (which consisted almost entirely of his own original fiddle tunes) and "Pride of America."

Survivors include his daughter Genevieve (Harrison) Koester and her husband, Smith of Chicago, Genevieve's mother, Gaye Harrison of Charleston, Illinois; twin brother Terry, and nephew Clifford Harrison of Charleston, Illinois; brother Steve and Linda (Catalana) Harrison and niece Molly (Harrison) Keene of St. Albans, West Virginia; and longtime friend and musical collaborator Jo Burgess of Bloomington, Indiana.

A memorial service will take place in the near future in Charleston, Illinois.

Donations to fund an old-time music scholarship can be made out to Pick Away Press, P.O. Box 7102, Bloomington, IN 47407.

Allen Funeral Home 4155 South Old Highway 37 is handling the arrangements and online condolences may be sent to the family at www.allenfuneralhome.org.

To leave condolences online, visit www.jg-tc.com, click on obituaries, select the individual's name and click on "Comments" to log in.