



Professor William John Breitenbach

January 21, 1936 - August 14, 2011

Huntsville, Texas resident for more than 40 years, Professor William John Breitenbach, 75, passed away August 14, 2011. He was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on January 21, 1936. Professor Breitenbach served in the United States Army from 1953 – 1956. He was stationed in Kenya, Africa. When he returned home he attended the University of Wisconsin where he received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Art Education. In 1965 he was offered the position of Professor of Art at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. He later earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from Stephen F. Austin University. He retired from SHSU in 2001. During his first several years at SHSU, he spent his summers teaching at the University of the Americas at Cholula, Puebla, Mexico. It was here he became interested in mask making and puppet making. In addition, he developed his skill in sculpting. In his later travels throughout the world he began his collection of masks. The Breitenbach Mexican Mask Collection, donated by Professor William Breitenbach, is displayed in the Newton Gresham Library on the SHSU campus. This is the largest collection of its kind in the world. He also has a piece of his sculptor, “The Flight of Daedalus”, on permanent display in the Department of Theatre and Dance. William is survived by his three daughters, Laura, Lisa and Linda; five grandchildren, Kaitlyn, Adam, Royce, Joy and Erik, all of San Diego, CA; and his sister Gerena and brother Bruce of North Port, FL. He also leaves behind a host of close friends who played very important roles in his life. At the family’s request a service will be held at a

later date. Those wishing to leave memorial condolences for the family may do so at www.shmfh.com

Tribute Wall



“ *Professor William John Breitenbach*

November 15, 2022 at 08:33 PM



“ *1 file added to the album Memories Album*



Milad - June 04, 2020 at 10:54 PM



Thank you for sharing this. I did not know his sculpture was on display there until now.

Laura Breitenbach - October 29, 2025 at 08:56 AM



“ *Breitenbach daughters,*

I just tonight learned about your dad's passing in 2011. I was sorry to learn that-my late condolences to you.

My husband, Andrew Jack passed away Feb. 5 this year, 2013. He and your dad were good friends when they taught at Southern Door. Bill had given Jack a beautiful mask and colorful puppet-I have it in our cottage office. Please say hello to your mom. Regards, Ann

Annette Andropolis - March 16, 2013 at 10:53 PM

JL

“ I just found out that "my friend Bill" had passed away. We met twice, the first time in Colima, Colima, ate together and the second time (and last time of course) in Mexico somewhere in Nov 2010.....For many years we kept in touch via internet...each day...what a nice experience!
Please know that he had a good friend up here in Granby, PQ, Canada.

jean pierre leblanc - November 24, 2012 at 09:19 PM

JH

“ I always called Bill my Dad. He was always there for me and truly a man of no judgements toward any other. He is a teacher of life management and a fine artist. I learned many things from Bill, among them how to hold joy in my heart for life. I was so fortunate to have him for an adopted dad. No one will come close to replacing him in both my mind and in my heart. James Hamilton

James Hamilton - October 26, 2011 at 02:15 PM

HR

“ What a great character.! I am proud to have known him. My deepest sympathy to his family.

Hub Randel - August 25, 2011 at 12:23 PM

DB

“ My son Jimmy and I will truly miss your Dad & Grandpa...

He was a truly special man.....

Our thoughts and prayers are with you all,

Diana Barnes and Jimmy Barnes

Diana Barnes - August 23, 2011 at 11:35 PM

CE

“ My thoughts are with you all. I took a HEAP class the summer of 1986 from your dad. I had a blast and I still have a puppet I made in that class.

Charlotte Efird - August 21, 2011 at 07:36 PM

JJ

“ Laura, I did not find out about your Dad until this morning when I opened the paper. If I can get your number, I will call you. William John was a special friend, one I will never forget. Bless you, Breitenbach. You will be missed.

Jeannine Jacoby (j j) - August 21, 2011 at 08:47 AM

KB

“ Dear Laura, Lisa, and Linda, and all the grandchildren, I am very sorry for your loss of your Dad. Keep in mind, all the good memories. I will always remember your Dad as I have known him through the years. I have particularly fond memories of when he took Laura, Linda, and I camping at Lake Travis when we were children and Linda floated out to the middle of the lake with only a life jacket on. Your Dad was a very interesting man with lots of interests of his own. My love goes out to you girls. Your lifelong friend, Kathlyn Black

Kathlyn Black - August 19, 2011 at 10:20 AM

BS

“ Laura, very nice obituary for Bill, I'm sure he would of been proud of you for handling everything professionally and gracefully! You've done a good job and considering the distance from San Diego to Huntsville you made a few trips there to spend time with him during his final days during his illness! I'm sure Bill appreciated all you've done for him over the last 20 years! Your a good daughter that loved her dad and showed it through unselfish acts of kindness. I'm sure you and Kaitlyn will miss him deeply! My condolences to the rest of the family! Bill

Bill Sargent - August 18, 2011 at 03:37 PM

M(

“ Laura, Kaitlyn and family,
I am so sorry to hear about your beloved Father and Grandfather. I know he loved each of you in his own special way. What a great write up this was. I did not know all this about your Father, Grandfather.
Please know I am thinking about all of you my heart breaks for you as you suffer this loss.
Their has been to much heartache in our families. All my love

Monica Page (Krowel) - August 17, 2011 at 08:52 PM

BN

“ My deepest sympathy to the family of Bill. He had a huge impact on the SHSU Art Department and will be remember by many. May God give you comfort during your time of sorrow.

Beverly Niederhofer - August 17, 2011 at 11:02 AM

GZ

“ Hi Laura and all other of Bill's Loved Ones,
I just heard about Bill's passing and just wanted you to know how much Bill meant to all of us in the Zellar family. Not the least because he was one of Dad's true blue, through thick and thin, no limits friends through all the years they knew one another. Bill was a true friend and we all loved him for the force of nature which he truly was. Rest in peace, William J.

Gary Z

Gary Zellar - August 15, 2011 at 08:11 PM