

OUR LIVES

Bill Raffensperger 1940-2010

Publicity-shy rocker was one of the greats

“Bill was the measure of all bass players,” a bandmate says.

BY TIM STANLEY
World Staff Writer

Poring over one of his prized National Geographic magazines with his cat King Tut cuddled up next to him doesn't sound like the way a real rock 'n' roller would spend his off-stage time.

But bass player Bill Raffensperger defied just about all the rock stereotypes, friends and relatives say.

Soft-spoken and publicity-shy, the longtime bassist for rock legend J.J. Cale managed to score a place among Tulsa's rock 'n' roll elite despite doing his best to duck the spotlight.

William Arthur “Bill” Raffensperger died Wednesday. He was 69. A memorial service will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday at the River-Crest Chapel in Bixby.

Diagnosed early last week with esophageal cancer, Raffensperger still enjoyed a few jokes with bandmate Jim Ziegler during a hospital visit. But when he was told that everyone was thinking about him, he was embarrassed.

“Bill never loved the lime-light,” Ziegler said. “He liked



Tulsa rock 'n' roll pioneer Bill Raffensperger, who died Wednesday, was the longtime bassist for rock legend J.J. Cale but did his best to stay out of the spotlight.

Tulsa World file

to go to local jam nights just to listen. Inevitably they'd say, 'Folks, we've got the legendary Bill Raffensperger in the audience. Maybe we can get him to come up here and play.' Then they'd look at the door and Bill would be on his way out.”

Along with Cale, David Gates, Leon Russell, Rocky Frisco and others, Raffensperger, a graduate of Edison High School, helped establish the rock subgenre known as the Tulsa Sound. In recent years, he performed with local blues/rock band the Zigs.

Raffensperger took up the bass guitar in Edison's band after a brief experience with

the sousaphone. After high school, the budding bassist migrated to California with other young Tulsa rockers.

When Raffensperger's wife, Anne Raffensperger, became pregnant, the couple returned to family-friendly Tulsa to raise their child, relatives said.

Raffensperger, one of the first in the area to use the electric bass, began playing local clubs and touring with Cale, later helping form the Jamie Todd Trio.

As a child, his brother Ken Raffensperger wanted to play bass like his older brother. But while inspiring young would-be musicians such as

legendary bassist Carl Radle, Bill Raffensperger never sought idol status.

When a film crew was traveling with Cale for a documentary, Bill did his best to steer clear of the camera, his brother said. “He was not a self-promoter by any stretch,” he said.

Zigs bandmate Jim Downing calls the bassist one of the unsung legends of Tulsa rock 'n' roll.

“He was so humble, and although he certainly could have dropped some names, he wasn't like that,” he said. “He knew that wasn't the measure of a man. But to me, Bill was the measure of all

bass players. He just had the perfect feel and touch.”

When he put aside his guitar, Raffensperger found comfort in the feel and touch of King Tut, his gray cat who died last year. The cat was the musician's beloved sidekick for 18 years.

Raffensperger also was a lifelong fan of National Geographic magazine. He saved all his issues, frequently mentioning things he'd read.

Being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis five years ago and having to use a walker at times didn't stop him from playing music every Friday night until recently, relatives said.

“We've lost one of our finest musicians and people,” said pianist Rocky Frisco, who had known Raffensperger since first playing with him the 1950s. “He was incredibly gifted and an uncommonly fine person.”

Survivors include two sons, Todd Raffensperger of Boynton Beach, Fla., and Adam Raffensperger of Tulsa; one daughter, Jaime Alford of Mesquite, Texas; two brothers, Tom Raffensperger of Houston and Ken Raffensperger of Tulsa; and five grandchildren.

Per his wishes, Raffensperger's body will be donated to science.

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SpaghettiOs, Chunky Soup creator dies

Donald Goerke, the Campbell Soup Co. executive who was behind the enduring brands SpaghettiOs and Chunky Soup, died Sunday at his home in Delran in southern New Jersey. He was 83.

Goerke was marketing research director of Campbell's Franco-American line in the early 1960s when his group started dreaming up pasta in shapes that would appeal to kids.

He chose the o's. They were marketed with the unforgettable tagline, “Uh-oh, SpaghettiOs.”

Later, he helped introduce Chunky Soup, a hearty ready-to-serve soup that stood out from the company's traditional line of condensed soups.

The Waukesha, Wis., native worked for Camden-based Campbell for 35 years, retiring in 1990.

Jean Carroll, whose wry wit and caustic commentary helped make her one of the first women to succeed in stand-up comedy, died Jan. 1 of congestive heart failure at a hospital in White Plains, N.Y. She was 98.

A veteran of vaudeville, nightclubs and television, Carroll was both a role model and a rapid-fire jokester, quick to see the humor in the human predicament and happy to share her acerbic take on it.

At the peak of her career, she regaled audiences in New York's mammoth movie palaces on a schedule that sometimes required taking the stage in jewels and furs several times a day.

In the 1950s, she made more than 20 appearances on “The Ed Sullivan Show,” the variety hour that was one of early television's landmarks.

Stand-up comedy puts the personality on display, with failure a constant fear and little protection but nerve, spontaneity and verbal dexterity.

Once it was an almost exclusively male province.

Many of the women who dared enter the field found their role model in Carroll.

Comedian Lily Tomlin has told of the inspiration provided by Carroll, assertive and independent, “standing up ... telling jokes about her life.”

Dipped in sarcasm, and delivered in rapid-fire style, the barbed comments offered by Carroll skewered human frailty and folly.

“People are never satisfied,” she would say. “Single men wish they were mar-

U.S.-WORLD DEATHS

ried. Married men wish they were dead.”

Or she would discuss what she claimed was her own married life.

“Tonight you are really going to enjoy yourself,” she quoted her husband as saying. “Why?” she answered, full of brass and bravado. “You leaving me?”

Or she might describe her satisfaction when her mother ended a visit, “and I could hit my own kids.”

That was not the way women — even women in show business — talked in public 60 years ago. But audiences found it very funny.

Born Celine Zeigman in Paris on Jan. 7, 1911, into a family in transit across Europe to the United States, Carroll apparently didn't have the happiest upbringing. It was said that a childhood memory of her father once flinging his dinner at her mother made her decide never to be beholden to a man.

After winning \$5 prizes as a child dancer in amateur nights at theaters in New York, she got work in vaudeville. She married performer Buddy Howe, and the two had a dance act.

When he went into the Army during World War II, she was on her own. She had begun addressing comments to audiences and “just got better and better” at it, said her daughter, Helen Tunick of Carmel, N.Y.

From that sprang her com-

ROUNDLY APPROVED



Donald Goerke: He was marketing research director of Campbell's Franco-American line in the early 1960s when his group started dreaming up pasta in shapes that would appeal to kids. He chose the o's. They were marketed with the unforgettable tagline, “Uh-oh, SpaghettiOs.”

edy routines. She wrote them herself.

“She wrote on a dinky, almost-impossible to use portable typewriter” in the family apartment, her daughter said. “She would decide she needed some new material and would go into almost seclusion and just write.”

She was “very disciplined and very smart,” she said.

Although proud of what she did, Carroll put on no airs, her daughter said.

“She would finish cleaning the house, and then take her gown and shopping bag with her shoes and makeup and go to work.”

Her husband, who became a talent agent, died in 1981. She lived in Hartsdale, N.Y.

In 2006, the Friars Club gave Carroll a formal salute, said author Stephen M. Silverman, who made a documentary about Carroll.

At the end, after being hailed as a role model and pioneer, the 96-year-old could be heard saying, with an amused nod to then-current political campaign spots:

“I'm Jean Carroll, and I approve this message.”

Sir Allen McClay, founder of pharmaceutical giant Almac Group, died Tuesday in Philadelphia. He was 77.

McClay died at Hahnemann University Hospital, where he was being treated for cancer since falling ill during a November business trip, said Jim Murphy, president of the company's clinical services division in suburban Philadelphia.

Last year he established the McClay Foundation, a charitable trust that works to advance cancer research.

Northern Ireland lawmaker Dr. Alasdair McDonnell called McClay “a great pioneer and a great visionary.”

“Allen was an honest, approachable, unpretentious and exceptionally generous man,” McDonnell said. “His death is a great loss not just to the entrepreneurial world but to Northern Ireland.”

McClay founded pharmaceutical sales and marketing company Galen Ltd. in 1968. He later folded the company into the Almac Group, a Craigavon, Northern Ireland-based company that employs 2,500 people in Britain and the United States.

Almac has U.S. offices in Yardley, Pa.; Durham, N.C.; and San Francisco.

McClay was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 2005.

— FROM WIRE REPORTS

DEATH NOTICES

FROM A10

— JoAnn Shields, 77, office manager, died Tuesday. Services pending. Mowery.

Park Hill — Myrna Marie Qualls, 73, homemaker, died Wednesday in Tulsa. Services pending. Reed-Culver, Tahlequah.

Perry — Alma Antonia Zavodny Dunagan, 93, died Wednesday. Services pending. Brown-Dugger.

— Allen Lewis “Short” Webb, 80, died Wednesday. Service 2 p.m. Saturday, Calvary Baptist Church. Perry Funeral Home.

Sapulpa — Margaret E. Ament, 74, homemaker, died Sunday. Service 2 p.m. Saturday, Smith Funeral Home Chapel.

— Robert Eugene “Bob” Carter, 78, plumbing contractor, died Saturday. Visitation 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursday, Green Hill Funeral Home, and graveside service 2 p.m. Friday, Sunrise Cemetery, Kellyville.

— Calvin Orcutt, 84, driller, rancher and shale pit operator, died Tuesday. Service 10 a.m. Friday, Smith Funeral Home Chapel.

— Alpha Marie Ruston, 63, homemaker, died Wednesday. Services pending. Add'Vantage, Tulsa.

Shamrock — Jackson J. Reeb, 80, rancher, died Wednesday in Hallett. Graveside service 2 p.m. Friday, Pawhuska Cemetery, Pawhuska. Michael's, Drumright.

Stigler — James Shelby Jones Jr., 65, truck driver, died Friday. Graveside service 2 p.m. Saturday, Tecumseh Cemetery, Tecumseh. Hunn Black & Merritt, Eufaula.

Stillwater — Mildred Colasacco, 91, homemaker, died Wednesday. Rosary 6 p.m. Friday and funeral Mass 10 a.m. Saturday, both at St. Francis Catholic Church. Strode.

Whitesboro — Herman Keith, 79, mechanic, died Monday. Service 2 p.m. Saturday, Assembly of God, Talihina. Talihina Funeral Home, Talihina.

POULTRY:

Water-quality issues are a result of faulty sanitation systems, a witness says.

FROM A9

the “natural condition” of the Illinois River watershed.

McGuire characterized the 18 water-treatment plants that get water from Lake Tenkiller as “very good sources” of drinking-water supply.

Any problems with the drinking water could be attributed to faulty sanitation systems rather than the raw water itself, he said.

The state has contended that exceedances of water-quality standards by municipal water-treatment plants in the watershed can be traced in part to overapplication of poultry litter in the watershed.

McGuire also said the state has offered no laboratory evidence during the trial that indicated any taste or odor problems with treated water from the watershed.

In other testimony, a former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency scientist downplayed the health risks associated with Lake Tenkiller's water quality.

Herman Gibb, a health risk-assessment consultant, said cancer in humans has not been linked definitively to water-treatment plant disinfection byproducts.

Gibb also said any risks in the Illinois River watershed that might be associated with blue-green algae were negligible.

If any blue-green algae, also known as Cyanobacteria, exists in the watershed, Gibb said he doesn't believe that it poses a risk to human health.

Cyanobacteria can produce toxins that in sufficient quantities can be harmful to plants and animals.

The state contends that levels of Cyanobacteria reported in a number of studies conducted within Lake Tenkiller represent an imminent and substantial endangerment to human health.

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Future sailors slated to learn martial arts

OWASSO — Future sailors in the Tulsa area will participate in a martial arts seminar at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Owasso Martial Arts Academy, 9100 N. Garnett Road.

The seminar is part of training that future sailors get as part of the Delayed Entry Program while awaiting boot camp. During the program, they learn Navy structure and organization basics and physical conditioning.

“This seminar will be held to build up the self-confidence of our soon-to-be-sailors and to continue to build the discipline that we try to teach prior to shipping to boot camp,” said Senior Chief Todd Barney, senior enlisted adviser for recruiting stations in eastern Oklahoma.

— RHETT MORGAN, World staff writer

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