



Pepper Martin

January 30, 1953 - March 11, 2023

It is with a sad heart that the family of Pepper Martin must announce his passing at the age of 70. He often said he was “living on borrowed time” after gratefully receiving a liver transplant in 2003. And on March 11 he succumbed to bladder cancer at Valley Baptist Hospital in Harlingen.

He was preceded in death by his father Charlie Martin, mother Priscilla Martin and sister Linda Martin. He is survived by his sister Glenda Gruetzner (Allen), his sister Karla Trietsch (Lewis), five nieces, a nephew, four grand-nieces and a grand-nephew, numerous cousins, and his devoted cats Bandit, Peanut, and Joey.

Pepper was born in Houston and was the oldest of four. He enjoyed nature photography, astronomy and gazing at the galaxy through his telescope. He attended John H. Reagan HS where he excelled in school, where he enjoyed playing his Trombone, and where he won several Scholastic Art Awards. He received an AA Degree from Houston Community College in 1974 and studied Mechanical Engineering at the University of Houston. He moved to Michigan and worked as a Quality Assurance Engineer for 15 years, before moving to Harlingen to work for Trico Industries as a QA Engineer. He lived in the Valley for 29 years.

He never married or had children, but his niece Alicia recalls him taking her

and her sister Cristy to art & science museums and the Planetarium when he lived in Houston, and later encouraged them to attend college. Since Alicia worked at NASA, they often talked throughout the years about the space program. He was proud of her work on the SERFE project for Astronauts that was tested on the International Space Station. Pepper was proud of all his nieces and nephews and their many accomplishments throughout the years.

Pepper was named after the St. Louis Cardinals baseball player who won several World Series Championships and was the MVP in the 1931 Series. Our Pepper's Dad knew him, admired him and asked, "If my wife ever has a boy, can I name him after you" and he said yes. They were later featured in a newspaper "Pepper Martin meets his Namesake". He was known as "the Wild Horse of the Osage". Pepper would admit he had been a bit wild in his younger days and fearless. He was known as "the heart and soul" of the Cardinals. Our Pepper had a lot of heart and soul too. In the 1934 World Series, baseball player Pepper dove headfirst into the stands to catch a ball and often slid headfirst into bases. His fearless attitude and determination helped overcome adversity in his life just like our Pepper. Our Pepper was a fighter conquering various health issues, but he didn't give up until the very end, hoping to spend more time with family.

Pepper was a soft spoken, quiet, caring person with a gentle soul. His long-time neighbor told us Pepper would mow his grass for free and often gave his son baseball caps.

Pepper was also a history buff and studied all the Wars and loved war documentaries. He loved air shows. His favorite trip was an Alaskan Cruise. His favorite thrill was jumping out of an airplane. He liked hats and caps. He liked the Star Trek series when he was younger, loved the Star Wars Movies, favorite movie was Bicentennial Man starring Robin Williams, and his favorite song was "What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong. One favorite

instrumental was “Faire the Well” by Lisa Lynne. His future dream car was Aptera’s soon to be released electric car.

He enjoyed playing his wood flute with his songbirds singing in the background & his cats on his lap. He loved animals and believed animals should be cherished. He showed that by rescuing many cats and for years he would drive around Harlingen leaving food and water in various areas where there was a large number of homeless cats. When he passed away, he had 3 inside cats he raised from kittens and 14 outside cats he had rescued from the streets (he fed them very well).

"Love is like a cupped hand dipping into a stream to give water to another. Love cannot be held onto, only given, or it will slip through your fingers" – P.M. Pepper Martin was a man of many talents; besides being a Quality Assurance Engineer, artist, avid reader and researcher, he wrote the above poem.

He would say the most important thing in this world “is to love others”. He showed love for his family by his concern for them; when there was an illness in the family or upcoming surgery, he would do extensive research on the doctor and the surgical procedure. He would give advice on many other things too. Pepper, your family loves you and will miss your advice and you will live on in our hearts and memories.

A small private memorial service will be planned later for immediate family. If you ever feel led to donate to a “no-kill animal shelter” think of our Pepper.

When his niece Alicia read this poem she thinks of Pepper and of what cancer cannot do.

“Cancer is so limited
It cannot cripple love

It cannot shatter hope
It cannot corrode faith
It cannot eat away peace
It cannot destroy confidence
It cannot kill friendship
It cannot shut out memories
It cannot silence courage
It cannot reduce eternal life
It cannot quench the Spirit” – Anonymous