



## Robert "Bobby" Neill

June 26, 1954 - February 27, 2012

Services for Robert L. (Bobby) Neill, 57, of Tyler are scheduled for Thursday March 1, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. at the Stewart Family Funeral Home with the Reverends Stephanie Scott and Richard Luna officiating. Visitation will be on Wednesday, February 29, 2012 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the funeral home, 7525 Old Jacksonville Highway, Tyler. Mr. Neill passed away Monday, February 27, 2012 at East Texas Medical Center Specialty Hospital in Tyler. Bobby was born June 26, 1954 in Tyler to Walter Lamar Neill and Della Marie (Rachui) Neill. He received a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree and a Master of Science Degree with an emphasis in Psychology. He retired from Goodwill Industries in 2006 after 25 years as a Vocational Evaluator. He was recognized as the Disabled Citizen of the Year in 1989 by the Texas Rehabilitation Association. Bobby was a strong advocate for the rights of individuals with physical and mental challenges. Bobby was devoted to his family and cherished his friends. He had a kind heart and a gentle spirit. He loved Texas football, Tiger Woods playing golf, Monday Night Wrestling and any John Wayne movie. All who knew Bobby will miss the man who was always "there for them". Mr. Neill is survived by his mother, Della; his sister Gail Neill Kuehl and husband Richard of Hays, Kansas, niece Mary Neill of Tyler, and four nephews: Jonathan J. Neill of Tyler, Matthew W. Kuehl and Manny Garcia de Quevedo of New York, NY, James R Kuehl and wife Kelsey Koerner Kuehl of Hays, Kansas, and Robert Kuehl and fiancée Rebecca Burton of Hays, Kansas. He was preceded in death by his father and his

brother, Jay L. Neill of Tyler. The family extends deep appreciation to Dr. Thomas H. Alexander and his compassionate nursing staff along with the dedicated staff of the East Texas Medical Center Specialty Hospital. Donations in Bobby's honor can be made to Goodwill Industries of Tyler, Pollard United Methodist Church of Tyler and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Wichita, Kansas.

# Tribute Wall

EH

“ Bobby is the quintessential definition of what a friend is. He is loyal, true, faithful, generous, kind, compassionate, and most of all gentle.

*It has been my honor for the past forty years to call Bobby my friend.*

*I love you and will dearly miss my friend.*

*Eddie*

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**Eddie Howard** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

RK

“ We are so sorry to learn of Bobby's passing. We met Bobby through my sister, Maxine Cookston Evans. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time of sorrow. Ron and Mary

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**Ron Cookston and Mary Koch** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CB

“ Our prayers are with you...

*Psalm 34:18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

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**Charlene and Bill Burton** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

“ 2 Timothy 4:7

*I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith.*

*I was blessed to visit with Bobby in the hospital last week. He was the same old "Godfather"... interested in me, my family, and how I was. We laughed and remembered a boat ride I took him on after his accident. Racing down Lake Tyler with music blaring, going as fast as the boat would go, hitting waves too hard, and loving life together. He said.. "Yeah, we were young, dumb, and had so much fun!" Although, the years went by and life got in the way I wasn't able to see Bobby as much as I would have liked, but each time I went by for a visit it was as if time had stood still. Bobby is someone I admire and look up to for his courage, quick wit, strength, zest for life, and for his Big Heart. Bobby... I will miss you, Godfather. Here's to John Wayne, The University of Texas Longhorns, and knowing you are smiling that smile watching over each of us until we "catch up" one of these days. Watching the love of your family, and especially the strength and complete devotion of your mom to her family I would like to share this poem by Helen Steiner Rice. To a strong Texas woman, and a strong Texas lady that defines what it is to be a mother.*

#### *A Mother's Love*

*A mother's love is something that no one can explain- It is made of deep devotion and of sacrifice and pain. It is endless and unselfish and enduring, come what may. For nothing can destroy it or take that love away. It is patient and forgiving when all others are forsaking...And it never fails or falters even though the heart is breaking. It believes beyond believing when the world around condemns, And it glows with all the beauty of the rarest brightest gems. It is far beyond defining, it defies all explanation, And still remains a secret like the mysteries of creation. A many splendored miracle man cannot understand. And another wonderful evidence of God's tender guiding hand.*

*You two... and The Neill Family made quite a team. I hold each of you in my heart and in my prayers. Hook 'EM!*

**Shelley Evans Ziehe** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

CB

“ *I first met Bobby at Goodwill when he was vocational trainer and saw him often during the years before my retirement at TRC. I grew to value him as a friend and always loved to staff the evaluations he did with that person and himself. He would tell them "like it is" and most were motivated more after they knew him through that contact. I grew to value his friendship and look forward to the laughs we had due to his great sense of humor. (He insisted that I was always late to the appointments with him.) The world has lost a great advocate for people with disabilities and a genuine good, good person. I'll always love him and be sorry he's not here with us. I know he is whole now, without pain and in the arms of God making Him smile too.*

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**Carole M. Barnes** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

HH

“ Bobby my dear friend, I will cherish all our memories of laughter & tears! You were always my champion and after my boating accident in 1980 you held my hand through some tough times. You played "matchmaker" for me with Eddie... coaching Eddie the whole time(ha)! While over 30 years flew by us, you took one long day at a time with all the courage, strength, patience & unwavering faith that God would see you through. Your families devoted steadfast loyal love and care for you is beyond description. Prayers that God will hold them close during this time of sadness.

These past three years we were able to talk and spend some amazing time together and I was reminded of how truly brilliant you are. Nothing got by you EVER and you kept me laughing with your jokes about "20 min. of yard time" and a million other things.

Bobby, I CELEBRATE your life and am so blessed to have been your friend. Now and forever you are free to run as fast and as hard as you have waited for such a long long time.

Dance one or two dances with Angels for me....xxoo's

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**Holley Howard** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

BA

“ I have thought about Bobby many times since high school. I haven't seen him in years, but I will always remember how friendly he was. He was a determined person to not give up despite his injury. I know he is in the thoughts and prayers of so many of his classmates right now.

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**Brenda Hughey Arnold** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

BA

“ Robert "Bobby" Neill

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**Brenda Hughey Arnold** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

WW

“ Of all our classmates, I believe I admired Bobby the most for the grace and perseverance he demonstrated after his accident. I don't believe I would have kept my spirits up as he did. I know he suffered greatly and am thankful he doesn't suffer any more.

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**Wayne Wilson** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DA

“ My prayers are with the family during this time.

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**Dyan Alexander** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

DA

“ From the beginning of my time working at Goodwill Industries Bobby had a great influence on me. His kindness and encouragement helped me excel in everything I did at Goodwill and beyond. Because of him I was able to move on up the ladder and become a true professional. Being a minister, I had many talks with him about God and heaven and was assured of his great faith. Although, he had a side of him, like everyone, where if you crossed the line he would let you know about it, (professionally of course). Bobby was never mean to anyone, but had a soft side, especially to the clients he worked with, having complete understanding what they were going through. He gave hope to others was by being an overcomer of his own disability. He was a hard working careing man, full of compassion and love. Though he couldn't walk, he left some extremely large shoes to fill. He will be missed, but not forgotten. Bless you my friend, enjoy the rest God is now giving you. You deserve it more than anyone I know.

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**David & Karen Andersen** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

RH

“ My condolences to the Neill Family. Bobby was a wonderful caring person that did not let anything get in the way of helping others. He will be missed.

*Edna Hester apologizes for not being able to visit, but is home bound.*

*God has a caleed for one of His special children!*

*Take care.....*

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**Rick Hyatt** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

RS

“ Bobby and I met in 1960 in Mrs. Knife's first grade class at Andy Woods. We enjoyed years of sports together-flag football teammates at Andy Woods, competing against each other in junior high, beating each other's brains out in full contact 1-on-1 basketball at my house and in the Green Acres Baptist Church parking lot, then as teammates at REL until Bobby's injury. The biggest debt I owe Bobby is his speaking up for me to Julia's parents on the day in 1970 that I met my future wife. In typical Bobby fashion, he passionately intervned with Julia's parents to assure them that I was a good guy and that it was OK for her to go on a date with me that evening.

*After Bobby's injury, I maintained contact over the years. He demonstrated exemplary levels of grace and depths of courage in the face of physical challenges that continually presented themselves. His surviving for 4-plus decades following his accident was both baffling and an amazing display of fortitude.*

*Remembering Bobby after receiving the news of his death yesterday, Julia and I smiled at the image of Bobby walking past St. Peter into heaven after his last breath. Walking slowly and deliberately and with a sense of faith fully realized! That walk was a long time coming, and I am confident that he enjoyed each step.*

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**Rusty Shelton** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

GS

“ I met Bobby in Cub Scouts when I was 7 years old. We were always amiable, but became much better friends at Tyler State College (now UT-Tyler). Bobby needed someone to assist him at school, and it was me. I learned a lot from Bobby. I learned how the attendants in the ambulance that night 40+ years ago were talking about him not even making it to Dallas. They didn't know Bobby's will. I learned that physical difficulties do not stop someone from accomplishing things, and I learned that despite his injuries, Bobby was still himself underneath. Would we have had it any other way? He even got me to study for school for about the first time in my life, which ultimately made my current career possible. He was blessed with loving parents, family and friends. I marvel now at the love and devotion his parents exhibited, especially after his accident. He blessed many of us in unexpected ways, too, and I am thankful he was my friend. May the Lord give comfort to his family now at this time of loss.

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**Garry Smith** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

TR

“ Bobby, you were one of a kind and loved by all. I remember you being such an encourager when others were so ready to put you down. You were a joy to be around and an inspiration to us all. My heart goes out to your family as they lost a treasure today, but we'll all be together again and what a reunion that will be!

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**Teresa Connally Roberson** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

TH

“ As the class of 1972 prepares to celebrate their 40th reunion, the memories of Bobby is so very vivid for every classmate. He was one determined young man that was an inspiration to myself and many many others. He always had a smile on his face and only nice things to say. We all learned a lot from Bobby. He will be missed by so many people and my thoughts and prayers go out for all the family. RIP Bobby..... We know you are walking the streets of gold and having a 40th reunion of your own with over 27 other fellow classmates not to mention friends and family. All of you with healthy bodies and full of life. Until we meet again.... You will be missed.

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**Teresa Avent Hodge** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

SF

“ There are certain people who are unforgettable. Bobby truly was one of those special few!  
My deepest condolences to his family and close friends. Enjoy dancing on those streets of gold Bobby!

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**Susan Forsgard** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

LP

“ I remember how brave Bobby was after the accident and how determined he was at therapy. Even though I wasn't a close friend, his life was an inspiration to me!

*My prayers and thoughts are with your family!*

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**Lisa Calmes Peniston** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ *My thoughts and prayers are with you. I loved Bobby and will miss him dearly.*

*Love y'all!*

*Julia*

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**Julia Shelton** - February 27, 2012 at 12:00 AM