

Wyoming Wildlife Artist Vivi Crandall Dies At 56



BALLOONS RELEASED FOR VIVI

Artist Vivi Crandall lit up a room the minute she walked into it. It was her aura the people closest to her said. Where there was laughter, buoyancy and fun, that's where Vivi was – in the middle of it. She probably created it. People were just instantly attracted to her. Crandall's friends and husband describe her as a vivacious, wild, warm and loving woman who once kissed former Wyoming Gov. Mike Sullivan on top of his baldhead with her lipsticked lips and called him "Mikey". Crandall battled breast cancer three years ago. On a routine check up last June, doctors found spots on her liver and lung. What was thought to be metastasized breast cancer turned out to be metastasized melanoma, a very deadly skin cancer. Vivi never had an unusual mole to alert her to the disease. By the time she was diagnosed, her chances of survival were very slim. After months of aggressive treatment, Vivi died on Sunday, April 30th 2000 at 56.

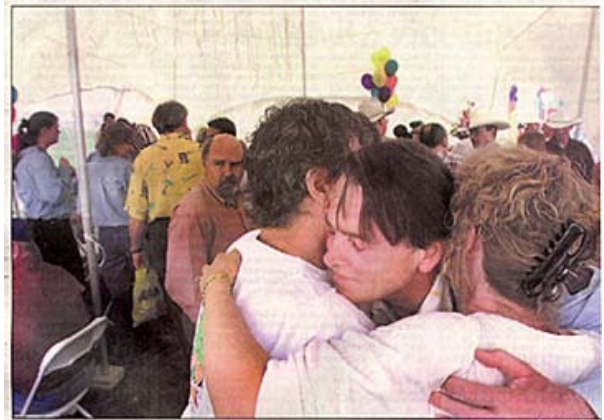


"CELEBRATE VIVI'S LIFE" SERVICE

The couple has two children, Cameron and Marc. Other surviving relatives include sisters Romy, and Hildegard, and their children Mahren, Cahllil, Jeff, Patrisha and grandson Carson.

Vivi was born in Germany and came with her family to New York in 1964. Gary and Vivi met in Washington D.C. where they both worked for the Washington Post. She worked as a graphic artist, winning more than 20 advertising awards for the paper in five years. She was the "darling of the Post," Gary says. She was his darling, too.

Good memories



Gary Crandall, husband of wildlife artist Vivi Crandall, is comforted by Jack and Debbi Savini during Vivi's memorial service Tuesday afternoon at City Park in Casper. Vivi Crandall died Sunday after a long battle with cancer. The upbeat service, where no black cloth was allowed, was "Vivi's last gift to her friends," Gary said about his wife of 26 years. "She had one hell of a good time here."

They moved to Wyoming in 1973 where they settled at the Bar 11 Ranch in Muddy Gap. There they started a hunting and outfitting business. In the summer the ranch served as a kid's camp. The couple became surrogate parents to many teenagers who returned year after year.

Vivi continued to paint for friends and family but did not return to it fulltime until the early 80's. After amassing a great deal of knowledge on North American wildlife and with her photographic memory she, naturally, started to paint the animals that had become a large part of her life.

In 1983, she had a large wildlife art show in Houston, which led to a deal with a publishing house to make and sell prints of her work. In 1985, Vivi and Gary became their own publishers. Her work continues to be among the most popular of all wildlife art.

Each of her paintings tells a story, whether it is a fat faced, furry bunny or a majestic elk standing in the trees.

She continued to paint through her illness. "It keeps me sane," she

A “Celebrate Vivi’s Life” service was held at Casper City Park in the afternoon on Tuesday May 2nd. No black clothing was allowed – only bright, lively colors.

That is typical Vivi. She didn’t want a funeral, no crying, just balloons and bright colors. She thought life was a party. Very few people can say that.

A famous international wildlife artist, Crandall’s paintings literally sprang to life. Some people even thought her paintings were photographs. You can feel the fur, see the motion and see the breath of an animal on a cold day through her paintings, all Vivi trademarks.

Vivi’s Artist’s Choice Gallery in Casper and website will continue to sell her work. Crandall’s husbands of 26 years, 55-year-old Gary, will continue to own and operate Artist’s Choice, which is also their own publishing outlet.

She donated many of her original paintings to wildlife conservation and medical organizations where they were auctioned off. “Eye of the Storm”, a painting of a bighorn sheep, went for \$105,000 at an event for the Foundation for the North American Wild Sheep. “New Generation,” a family portrait of black-footed ferrets, sold for \$108,000 to benefit the species. Her last painting “... and Fancy Free” was auctioned this past March for \$40,000 benefiting CES, “Community Entry Service”, a Wyoming charity. All of her original paintings have been sold.

said in a recent interview. “I believe in the future. When you stop doing that, you’re out of options. When you’re sick and you let it take over your life, you’ve lost, and I intend to win.”



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