

IN MEMORIAM Gerald A. Wilde

By Heather Wilde

Gerald Anthony Wilde was born on January 11, 1945 in Cudworth, Saskatchewan where he grew up. After graduating with a diploma in the Natural Resources program at Kelsey College in Saskatoon, he became the Conservation Officer in Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan for two years. It was when he decided to return to University in 1967 that he met Heather Ann Lussier. They were married in 1969.

Gerald obtained a degree in Biology in 1970 and became a naturalist with the Royal Museum of Saskatchewan. Many hearts, young and old, were touched by Gerald's knowledge and his sincere love of wildlife as he shared his excitement in discovering new bird's nests, the fresh blossoms of the prairie flowers and the many small creatures who made their home at the Condie Nature Refuge.

A year later, Gerald studied large mammals as a Wildlife Technician with the Canadian Wildlife Service in Edmonton. During the summer, he investigated Grizzly Bear activity in the National Parks, and then moved on to the MacKenzie Pipe Line study for the winter months. This work gave him a marvellous opportunity to discover new pieces to understand the big picture, a personal goal that he worked toward with a lifetime of discoveries.

In 1972, Gerald became a Wildlife Instructor at the Hinton Forest Technology School (now the Environmental Training Centre), a position he held for 23 years. He never tired of dragging family, friends, colleagues and students along with him up mountain trails, into cold running streams, through thick under brush and deep into underground

caves to see, feel, hear, smell and be part of the wild outdoors he loved so much. His immense sense of curiosity and his unyielding, internal drive to test, to risk, to learn and to thirst for new adventures was the gift that allowed the rest of us to have lived such full lives with him.

A consistent presence in the wildlife field in West-central Alberta, Gerald was a free thinker. He became a thorn in the side of the government and the Forest industry, asking hard questions and demanding straight answers. He loved to trap, and became a nationally renowned trapping instructor. In 1987, Gerald took a year's sabbatical and became the Conservation / Education Coordinator for the Fur Institute of Canada, travelling from St. John's, Newfoundland to Bella Bella, British Columbia coordinating many aspects of the fur industry and promoting Humane Trapping methods.

Gerald and Heather raised two sons, Kristoffer and Jonathan. He taught them to love and respect nature; to use common sense; to reach for their goals; to be responsible for their wants, their needs and their deeds; to be accountable; to be loving and giving, to be spiritual, to have faith in God, to be at peace. He often recited this small poem, and lived his life by it.

I have only just a minute,
Only sixty seconds in it
Forced upon me can't refuse it
Didn't seek it didn't choose it
But it's up to me to use it
I must suffer if I lose it
Give account if I abuse it,
Just a tiny little minute
But eternity is in it.