

Subject: Fwd: IJoHF nominee - Scifres
Date: Tuesday, October 4, 2011 8:29 AM
From: Lawrence Taylor <injournalismhof@gmail.com>
To: Kurtis Beavers <kjbeaver@indiana.edu>

Billy N. Scifres, 84, passed away on Monday October 12, 2009 in Westfield, Indiana. He was born February 16, 1925 to the late Jacob and Laura Scifres in Crothersville, Indiana. He married Nancy C. Wellington on September 4, 1954. He is survived by his wife and their three daughters: Donna Riedel (Fred) of Cape May, New Jersey; Joan Kendall (Adam) of Greenwood, Indiana; Patty Rosini (Mauro) of Bahia, Mexico; and 5 grandchildren. He was active in conservation issues and loved the outdoors. Fishing, hunting, mushroom hunting and photography were some of his favorite activities, to be done simultaneously if possible. He loved to cook, make wine, and plant vegetable gardens. He enjoyed staying fit by playing tennis and lifting weights.

Bill was active in the Navy during World War II right out of high school. He attended Hanover College and Indiana University. He worked at the Indianapolis Star for 37 years as Outdoor Editor and writing the column "Lines and Shots." He freelanced for outdoor magazines and published two books: Indiana Outdoors and Bayou Bill's Best Stories. After retiring, he continued his column for several of Indiana's local papers. He received many awards for his writing and conservation work: Hanover's Lifetime Achievement Award, Sagamore of the Wabash from Purdue, Conservation Communications Award from the National Wildlife Federation, Conservationist of the Year from the Indiana Wildlife Federation, and was elected to the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame.

Bill's story-telling, knowledge, and love of the outdoors will be missed. A celebration of his life will be held at Shirley Brothers Fishers-Castleton Chapel at 9900 Allisonville Road. Visitation will be held Friday, October 16, 2009 from 4 pm to 7 pm. Funeral service will be Saturday, October 17, 2009 at 12 pm at the Shirley Brothers Fishers-Castleton Chapel. Memorial contributions in Bill's honor may be made to the Indiana Wildlife Federation in lieu of flowers.

Word has reached this corner that one of our boyhood heroes, "Bayou Bill" Scifres has made the long final journey to the happy hunting ground.

Bill had been in failing health for the last year but it was our pleasure to have known him during the last few years. He was true one-of-a-kind and what I would consider one of the last "Big City" Newspaper outdoor columnists.

Bayou inspired me, for better or worse, to pursue outdoor journalism and my copy of his first book, *Indiana Outdoors*, is among the most threadbare in my library. I didn't consider it as entertainment but rather as a textbook. I often wondered about getting Bill's blessing to write an updated version since it is now wildly out of date.

Of course, I waited too long.

Here is Bill's obit from Indystar.com:

Bill Scifres, whose outdoors column "Lines and Shots" appeared in The Indianapolis Star for 45 years, died Monday. He was 84.

Scifres, who joined The Star in 1953 as a police reporter before becoming outdoor editor, wrote his final column for The Star in 1999; his column later appeared in several other Indiana newspapers. He also wrote for outdoor magazines and published two books, "Indiana Outdoors" and "Bayou Bill's Best Stories."

He received numerous awards, including Sagamore of the Wabash, a Lifetime Achievement Award from Hanover, Conservationist of the Year from the Indiana Wildlife Federation and the Conservation Communications Award from the National Wildlife Federation. He was elected to the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame.

His funeral will be at noon Saturday at Shirley Brothers Fishers-Castleton Chapel, 9900 Allisonville Road. Visitation is Friday from 4-7 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial may be made to the Indiana Wildlife Federation.

From Crothersville newspaper

Those of us who grew up in and around Crothersville (and now enjoy those grey, wrinkled marks of maturity), knew the name Bayou Bill Scifres. After 84 seasons of hunting and fishing, the Almighty decided it was time for Bayou Bill to come home to rest. Native Americans would say he is in the happy hunting grounds, perhaps more appropriate for the man.

Bayou Bill was the most widely known ambassador for this community. Though he left Crothersville shortly after graduation in 1943 to join the Navy, his heart never did.

To the uninitiated. Billy Neal Scifres was an outdoorsman's outdoorsman. He grew up tromping the woods, fields, creeks, rivers and bayous (hence his nickname) of Jackson County.

Perhaps he & I had some special kinship: growing up in the same small town (albeit a generation apart), a love of the outdoors and all things wild, a career in the newspaper business, and a knack for embellishing a story.

After military service and college at Hanover and IU, he eventually landed a job at the Indianapolis Star and became an outdoor

writer offering experiences & tales afield, advice on how to improve one's fishing, hunting, and gathering techniques, and then sharing recipes for cooking the gleanings of the wild. (I still use Bayou Bill's recipe for Hickory Nut Pie at Thanksgiving.)

Bill told me on more than one occasion "Can you believe I have a job where they pay me to go hunting and fishing?"

And throughout his writing career he wrote about growing up and his outdoor exploits of "good ol' Crothersville".

While I had heard stories of Bayou Bill growing up—most of them from my Dad—I got to meet him for the first time at Jack Cain's funeral. Jack Cain was another local outdoorsman who took a young Bill Scifres under his wing to teach him all things outdoors. And Bayou Bill included memoirs of his mentor in his Indy Star column "Lines & Shots" and in both of his books "Indiana Outdoors, A Guide: Wildcrops, Fishing Hunting" and "Bayou Bill's Best Stories (Most of Them True!)"

I talked with Bill before his second book came out and he told me that he was telling stories of some Crothersville personalities and their youthful exploits. When I mentioned this to those local personalities it caused considerable worry amongst some of today's senior citizens that some embarrassing tales of youthful

indiscretion may become public knowledge. It was the reaction both Bill and I had sought.

When Bill's "Best Stories" was published in 1990 the newspaper did something that up until then, was unheard of in Crothersville. There as a book signing at the Crothersville Times office. Bayou Bill was there and enjoyed his visit as if he were a kid in a candy store with a no limit credit card. There was a crowd in the room and a line out the door of people waiting to buy their copy & get it signed. It took all morning and half the afternoon because as Bill signed his new book for folks he'd want to know who they were and who they were kin to and after hearing Bayou Bill would offer a story or an experience he had with the relative.

Of course I got a copy of his "Best Stories" signed and pulled out my well used, torn cover copy of "Indiana Outdoors" for him to autograph.

"Well, you know this is out of print," Bayou Bill told me of the 1976 book as he signed "To Curt! The best publicity man I ever had—and a great newspaperman!"

Shortly after that successful book event, I asked Bayou Bill to be my guest at a Muscatatuck Chapter Quail Unlimited banquet.

Dinner was delayed that evening as outdoorsmen from

throughout the county crowded around to meet him and tell Bill their own special stories of hunting and fishing and listen to those offered by the dean of Hoosier outdoorsmen.

Bayou Bill was as common and comfortable as an old shoe (maybe well seasoned hunting boot is a better analogy) but he pulled triggers, set hooks and swapped stories with some high profile personalities and did the same with the likes of other common folks from “good ol’ Crothersville”.

Bill Scifres tried to instill in us not just the taking—the joy of hunting and fishing and gathering wild crops—but the vital importance of conservation and preserving the outdoors so other generations could do the same.

With his passing there are some big hunting boots to fill.



Comments are closed.



Dedicated to the conservation and enjoyment of Indiana's natural resources

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About Bayou Bill Scifres



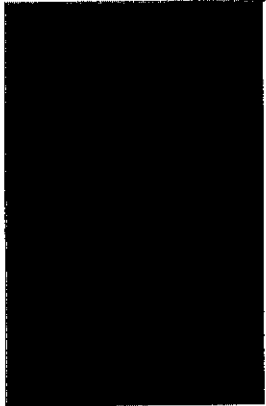
As the son of an ardent outdoorsman, Bayou Bill began his hunting and fishing lessons on the Muscatatuck River at the age of four, had his first rifle at age seven and his first bait-casting rod and reel at age eight. When ten, he began to hunt and fish alone or with some older men of the area.

Born at Crothersville, Indiana, prolific Hoosier author Bill Scifres wrote thousands of newspaper and magazine articles as well as two books, Bayou Bill's Best Stories and Indiana Outdoors. After more than 36 years as sports and outdoor writer for the *Indianapolis Star*, he retired in 1990 but continued to publish his outdoor-oriented *Lines and Shots* column there until 1999. Bill also did freelance writing for magazines and produced the popular *All Outdoors* column which regularly appeared in numerous newspapers throughout the state. At the time of his death in October 2009 he had nearly completed a third book and was also cooking up a fourth (the latter a cookbook he planned to title Just Add Heat: Bayou Bill's Simple Little Cook Book).

He received many awards for his writing and conservation work, among them Hanover College's Lifetime Achievement Award, Sagamore of the Wabash from Purdue University, the Conservation Communications Award from the National Wildlife Federation, Conservationist of the Year from the Indiana Wildlife Federation, and was elected to the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame.

Memorial contributions in Bill's honor may be made to the Indiana Wildlife Federation, 4715 W. 106th St., Zionsville, IN 46077, Phone: 1-800-347-3445 or 317-875-9453(WILD).

"Bill is truly a naturalist. His knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the outdoors extends far beyond hunting



and fishing. His enthusiasm is invigorating. He speaks to the outdoors literally and it seems to speak back to him. . . . I have never been with someone who enjoyed the outdoors as much as Bill seems to."-- Jon Marshall, Natural Science Manager - Public Affairs, Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, *Focus on Fish & Wildlife*

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"BAYOU" BILL SCIFRES OK by me; OK "by you"

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By Michael Ellis

Bayou Bill Scifres (rhymes with lifers) was born with a hunting license in one hand and a fishing license in the other ... at least that's the rumor, and it's not far from the truth.

When it comes to those two pursuits, Scifres has seen and done just about all Indiana offers.

His interest in the out-of-doors sprouted early. The son of an ardent outdoorsman, Scifres served as willing pupil to his father's lessons. He did the household chores expected of a kid, but free time meant a trip to the nearby fields and streams.

When he turned 4, his father took him to the Muscatatuck River to teach him to fish. When Scifres was 7, his dad gave him a single-shot, bolt-action, .22 rifle. A year later, he got his first bait-casting rod and reel.

"I was turned loose at the age of 10 to fish and hunt the area around Crothersville, including the two forks of the Muscatatuck River and their tributaries," he said. "There was a method in my father's madness. The year I turned 12, I bagged 85 squirrels and caught numerous strings of largemouth, smallmouth, rock bass, bluegills and bullhead catfish. Our large family of seven depended on wild game and fish for meat in the post-Depression era.

"My father gave me my first fly rod when I was 13. Fly fishing became an important method of fishing, but I still enjoy fishing in many ways with many types of tackle. I prize highly my days on streams and rivers, but still enjoy all kinds of fishing with all kinds of baits and lures," Scifres said.

World War II interrupted the

fun and he joined the Navy in 1942 before graduating high school.

"When my class graduated in the spring of 1943, my chair was draped with an American flag and my high school diploma was given to my mother," Scifres said.

After the Navy, Scifres went on to college at Hanover before transferring to IU. With almost four years of college under his belt, Scifres dropped out to be a reporter and copy editor for the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*. After two years he left for *The Indianapolis Star* to be a police reporter.

While working at *The Star* he began writing his thrice-weekly outdoors column "Lines and Shots," under the byline "Bayou Bill" Scifres. He wrote that column and other features for 45 years. He launched the newspaper's Big Fish contest, which ran for 29 years, including reports on the winners every Sunday, March through October. He strongly encouraged participation of both boys and girls.

He has written thousands of newspaper and magazine articles, and contributed to numerous books, two of which, "Bayou Bill's Best Stories" and "Indiana Outdoors," he wrote himself.

Now he's writing a cookbook called "Just Add Heat: Bayou Bill's Simple Little Cook Book," as well as a book criticizing utilities to be called "High Voltage."

Scifres loves to share his knowledge and expertise with others. He even invented a sport. A few years ago he and his younger brother took DNR photographer John Maxwell and Jon Marshall, former public affairs

chief for the Division of Fish and Wildlife, to learn how to do some "squirrelfishing."

Never heard the term before? It's a combination of fishing and squirrel hunting. You guessed it—Scifres carries a rod and reel, and a .22 rifle, at the same time. The idea came to him as he waded the shallows fishing, many times noticing squirrels in the overhead trees. He checked with a ~~conservation officer~~ and found that such double duty was legal while wading and fishing Indiana's streams and rivers.

Safety is always priority No. 1 for Scifres, including when he's enjoying that unique hobby. He said that if you decide to try squirrelfishing, make sure you keep your gun unloaded with the safety on.



Submitted photos

"Scrambling along wet stream banks and wading through fishing holes, you have to keep your mind on what you are doing," Scifres said.

After he ended his column at *The Star* in 1999, Scifres launched a weekly "All Outdoors" column in what he calls his "shirt-pocket syndicate." That column continues to be published in several Indiana papers.

Scifres knows how to get attention for conservation causes. His columns have provided editorial support and leadership in the forming of the Indianapolis Fly Casters as well as Friends of the White River. His well-thought-out rationale was critical in providing support for passage of Indiana's Nongame Section of the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

In the early '60s, there was a plan for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to "snag and drag" 8 miles of Indiana's southern Blue River, downstream from the Fredericksburg area. With the guidance of Woody Fleming, the former director of the DFW, Scifres launched a series of counter-

points in his newspaper column about the plan, which, people were told, was needed for flood control. His columns were even read in the U.S. Senate.

Fleming later told Scifres it was the first time a Corps of Engineers plan had been beaten in Indiana. The southern Blue River still rates as one of Hoosierland's best fishing streams.

On the family side, Scifres and wife Nancy have three daughters. He proudly proclaims that he has to live near water and, true to his word, he has never owned a house that wasn't.

Scifres has received numerous prestigious awards for his dedicated work in conservation and education. He was selected by then-Gov. Harold Handley to serve on Indiana's Conservation Education Committee. He has been honored as Indiana's first "Outdoor Writer of the Year," and also has been awarded a "Lifetime Achievement Award for Conservation" by the DNR.

He continues to do freelance writing for magazines and news-

papers. He also has his own Web site, "Bayou Bill's All Outdoors" at bayoubill.com.

If you think that by now age would have slowed down Scifres, you don't know Bayou Bill. His passion for the out-of-doors still burns brightly, and he continues to champion sound conservation projects.

According to Scifres, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to make good conservation decisions or understand their importance. His philosophy is simple, "We probably can't live here if wildlife can't." ■

Before retiring, **Michael Ellis** was assistant editor for *OI* and senior communications specialist for the DNR.

(Far left to right) Scifres fishes the Blue River in southern Indiana during the 1950s; he later helped sink a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plan to remove cover that was used by the river's game fish. Scifres hunts over his beloved dog, Clover. Scifres wears a skunk cap while "rabbishing" (fishing while hunting sitting rabbits) on a small lake in Hoot Owl Hollow, near the town of Brazil.

