



William Brent Hilton

April 7, 1972 - April 6, 2023

William Brent Hilton of Nashville, born April 7, 1972, a devoted family man and friend to many through his big-hearted love for hospitality, died on April 6, 2023, after a 31-month fight with glioblastoma. He was 50.

Born in Newport News, Virginia, to Debra and Gary Hilton, Brent was raised in Knoxville where he graduated from Karns High School. He attended East Tennessee State University in Johnson City - a loyal ETSU Bucs and Tennessee Vols Fan.

It's one of many topics he could bring up as he connected with folks and brightened rooms with a trademark twinkle in his eye (while maybe wearing a trademark pearl-snap shirt) a handful of homegrown tomatoes, a bottle of good wine to share and probably a quote from *The Big Lebowski*, his favorite movie.

Gardening was a love of Brent's, and he left his beloved adopted home of Nashville dotted with his Mamaw Sally's irises, the Tennessee state flower. From her garden in Knoxville, he carried the irises to his first East Nashville home on Ordway Place and lovingly gifted Iris bulbs to friends and family members to plant in their own home gardens.

It's one of the many ways Brent would "lead with love," a mantra of sorts that he took on after his cancer diagnosis, but one that he lived in small and large ways throughout life. Friends and family knew it by the way he coached the neighborhood kids in the East Nashville Little League. They knew it by the way he tended and grew extra tomatoes for gifting in his three garden beds

behind the house, a place he loved spending time with his girls, Stella, 8, and Vivian, 5. He showed his love and hospitality, too, in throwing the best Tomato Art Fest after-parties in all of East Nashville — beginning in his rowdier, single days, and later an open-door gathering for families with slip-and-slides, baby pools and a big cooler of rosé. And friends felt the love (and burn) in his evangelism for Nashville-style hot chicken. A hot chicken party, after all, is the first social invitation Brent extended to Traci — his then-future-wife (married in 2012) — where friends shared joyous tears from cayenne and an ongoing competition on who could bring the best bottle of German Riesling to wow the group.

Brent came to Nashville in the early 2000's after a stint in North Carolina (Asheville and Blowing Rock). He spent time working in those early days at the Wild Boar, one of the city's seminal fine-dining restaurants where culinary greats trained. In 2004, Brent joined the team at Best Brands and worked in many roles — from sales rep to on-premises wine manager to retail grocery manager to portfolio management. Wine was a natural extension of his love for dining out, weekly farmers' market visits, and cooking at home where he could elevate any recipe. Legendary for the best pimento cheese, shrimp salad and home-grown tomato sandwiches. An appreciation of food ended up giving him more time to live and love in this realm as he committed to a macrobiotic diet after his diagnosis led by macrobiotic nutritionist Virginia Harper with faithful support by Traci — a family's inspiring devotion to one another and a respect and gratitude for the Earth's gifts.

In addition to great food, a shared meal, fine wine and good whiskey, Brent loved restoring and cruising in Traci's great-aunt Margaret's Black 1967 Cadillac Fleetwood. He brought the old car back to life and took great pleasure in driving friends and family around East Nashville. He also loved music — all of it — the Stones, Steve Earle, Lucinda Williams, Herb Alpert, Drew Holcomb, all Classic Country Music, New Grass Revival, but especially Emmylou Harris, who he once recognized at the Nashville airport baggage claim simply by hearing her voice behind him. The lyrics to a favorite Beatles

song also served as a theme, and their sentiments will endure along with our memories of Brent and the love mutually shared: "In the end, the love you take," he would quote, "is equal to the love you make."

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Green and Sally Vanzant of Knoxville, TN and Horace and Oma Hilton of St. Charles, VA. Brent is survived by his beloved wife Traci Bond Hilton, and daughters Stella and Vivian, parents Gary and Debra Hilton of Burns, Tennessee, brother Neal Hilton and partner Jane Shultz of Hendersonville, many In-Laws and Nieces and Nephew Reagan, Oscar and Sophia Bond and Sister in Friendship, Hillary Sims.

A Visitation will be held at Phillips-Robinson Funeral Home, 2707 Gallatin Rd. in Nashville, on Thursday, April 20 from 4-8pm. Services will be held at Eastwood Christian, 1601 Eastland Ave. in Nashville, on Friday, April 21, at 11am. In lieu of flowers, Brent and family request that donations be made in support of his daughters' College Funds at <http://www.giftofcollege.com/Profile/tracibhilton/>

Previous Events

Visitation

APR 20. 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (CT)

Phillips-Robinson Funeral Home
2707 Gallatin Pike, Nashville, TN US 37216
Nashville, TN 37216

Memorial Service

APR 21. 11:00 AM (CT)

Eastwood Christian Church
1601 Eastland Ave.
Nashville, TN 37206

Tribute Wall



“ Sending so much love to Traci, Viv, and Stella. I'll miss seeing that kind smile and straw hat at pick up. The Williams are right around the corner if you need us.

elizabeth williams - April 20, 2023 at 09:40 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of William Brent Hilton.



April 20, 2023 at 09:59 AM



“ Large Basket Garden was purchased for the family of William Brent Hilton.



April 20, 2023 at 08:55 AM



“ Dutch Roell & Family purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of William Brent Hilton.



Dutch Roell & Family - April 19, 2023 at 05:18 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of William Brent Hilton.*



April 19, 2023 at 01:54 PM



“ *Joyful Memory was purchased for the family of William Brent Hilton.*



April 19, 2023 at 06:47 AM



“ *Aunt Patty, Gena, Tara & Audra purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of William Brent Hilton.*



Aunt Patty, Gena, Tara & Audra - April 16, 2023 at 01:08 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of William Brent Hilton.*



April 13, 2023 at 09:39 PM



“ *Beautiful Dreams was purchased for the family of William Brent Hilton.*



April 13, 2023 at 07:32 PM



“ *Condolences to the family*

Joe D Elswick - April 13, 2023 at 12:02 PM



Such a light and truly kind man. Prayers for the family! He will be missed!!!

Glenda Goodin - April 21, 2023 at 11:32 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of William Brent Hilton.*



April 13, 2023 at 10:57 AM