



Gerhard H. Rohr

December 7, 1943 - April 25, 2008

Merchant Delivers Wine with a Dash of History Customers frequented the wine shops as much to strike up a conversation with the proprietor as to buy a bottle of wine from him. Any conversation with Gerhard (Gary) H. Rohr could be a learning moment for the listener—about culture, about history, and of course, about how everything relates to wine. It was a brilliant selling strategy that lured customers in for repeat visits and purchases. But it wasn't a strategy at all. It was just his approach to life. Gary Rohr was a six-way intersection for philosophy, history, mythology, politics, art, and sociology. He knew stuff. Had a few degrees—a bachelor's in History and Economics from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, a Ph.D. in European History from the University of Rochester, a Master's in Business from the Kellogg School of Business at Northwestern University. Spoke two languages fluently, three additional languages well enough. He'd taught history classes at Wabash College and a few business courses at the City Colleges of Chicago. He was a tireless reader of books and a devoted fan of opera. Letting slip a bit of the knowledge he'd picked up over the years came naturally to him, but never pretentiously. Yet all of this wasn't enough. Gary began cultivating a passion for wine—took a position with a German wine company and five years later, opened his own wine shop in Lincoln Square, Fine Wine Brokers, along with business partner Philip Bernstein. Later they opened a wine and gourmet specialties shop, Artisan Cellar, in the Merchandise Mart. Gary specialized in hard-to-find wines and exceptional organic wines. What's more, he and his wife Louise traveled the world to visit the vintners and see the countries that produced the wines he sold. He already knew the general history and culture behind them; each new trip provided a more detailed and personal perspective of what his inventory represented. And sometimes a vintner would delight Gary by introducing him to a brand-new wine, and Gary would in turn introduce it to Chicagoans. But Gary's customers weren't the only ones who benefited from his store of knowledge. As a longtime resident of Edgewater Beach, Gary held court with his neighbors (especially the dog-loving variety). They could bring up any topic and know that Gary, his Airedale beside him, would have something insightful to add to the conversation—laced, of course, with his disarming wit. Sometimes only the twinkle in his eye would give away his meaning. Five months ago, cancer interrupted Gary Rohr's most recent travel plans; he died on April 25, 2008,

44 days shy of the 40th wedding anniversary he and Louise had so looked forward to sharing. He was 64, and no doubt still learning. Gerhard H. Rohr is survived by his mother, Lotte Rohr; his siblings Klaus Rohr (Angela) and Christel Mildenberg (Erich); his nephews Christopher Mildenberg (Flavia), Alexander Mildenberg (Corinn), Dante Rohr (Christine), and Karl Rohr (Erica); his mother-in-law Alma Vellam; his brother-in-law Anthony (Kathleen); his nieces Gioia (Dodd Perry) and Nadia; and his dog, Connor. He was preceded in death by his father, Gerhard F. Rohr, and his father-in-law, Andrea Vellam. Mass will be held at 11:00 on Wednesday, April 30, at The Church of the Atonement (doors will open at 10:00) in Chicago, with a reception following in the Rectory. The graveside ceremony will take place at 11:00 the next day, May 1, at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery, 3600 E. College Ave. in Cudahy, WI. In lieu of flowers, charitable donations may be made to The Church of the Atonement at 5749 N. Kenmore, Chicago, IL 60660; or The Airedale Terrier Rescue and Adoption (ATRA) c/o Connie Versagi at 1123 Vesper Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

Tribute Wall



“ *Gerhard H. Rohr*

October 08, 2023 at 11:31 AM



“ *I worked for him at Pieroth. He was always fair with me as a person and a proby wine salesman.*

Dennnis Murray - October 12, 2010 at 12:00 AM