



Sidney Neal Hetzler Jr.

October 1, 1940 - May 29, 2020

It is with great sadness that the family of Sidney Neal Hetzler, Jr announces his passing, on Friday, May 29, 2020, at the age of 79 years. A native of Kensington, Georgia, Sidney graduated from Baylor School in Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1958. His education continued to include a B.A. 1962, Vanderbilt University; M.S. 1973, Boston University; and a Ph.D. 1990, Emory University. Sidney owned the Hetzler Brokerage Company and had over 45 years in the food brokerage business, preceded by a 15-year communications career. Perhaps one of Sidney's strongest legacies is his advocacy for the arts in Chattanooga, specifically festivals and the dance community. In the early 1980s Sidney helped to create and served as the first president of the non-profit 'Friends of the Festival' which still supports the operation of the Riverbend Festival today. He later created a dance community at his Split Tree Farm in Kensington, GA, where many aspiring social dancers came to learn and be a part of the community that Sid fostered. The dance weekends that Sid hosted were a mix of contra, waltz, squares, tango, swing, and contact improv. Sidney was recently preceded in death by his brother William (Bill) Robert Hetzler, Sr. Sidney is survived by his sister Joan as well as his sister-in-law, Carol Hetzler, and his nieces and nephew, Jennifer, Rob, and Julie (Doug). A celebration of life memorial service will be scheduled at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Sidney can be made to the American Cancer Society, PO Box 22478 Oklahoma City, OK 73123. Online guest book at www.wilsonfuneralhome.com. Arrangements by W. L. Wilson &

Sons Funeral Homes – Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

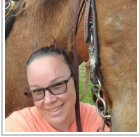
Tribute Wall

RP

“ Sid was a true inspiration to me as my professor at UTC. We shared many dear friends, and many good times. You will be dearly missed for sure my friend.....

Robert C. Prater

Robert Prater - June 09, 2020 at 09:30 AM



“ I met Sid one year after a tornado came through the cove and destroyed his hay barn. A few friends and myself helped to sift through the wreckage and salvage what hay we could and stack it in a different barn out of the weather.

After that, I was called upon to help with many other things at Split Tree Farms. Sid taught me how to drive a 4x4 truck through a muddy hay pasture. And I helped him with his horses.

Sid loved his horses. I remember going riding with him in the chickamauga battlefield and on pigeon mountain and on Saul-to-Paul many times. I worked with his horses for many years.

Because of Sid and his horses, I ended up learning barefoot trimming techniques and trimmed his horses every 6 weeks from 2008-present. This has become a passion of mine and I have since taken on several other clients and have mentored under a hall of fame farrier. All because of Sid and his horses.

I used to go to his music parties in the old hay barn and those were always so much fun. And I remember he made a roast duck for a friend of mine and myself once.

I don't know that I have ever met a more charismatic person in my life, and as someone else stated above, Sid was very multifaceted. He loved so many different aspects of life. Nature, music, dance, food, horses, festivals, friendship, writing, traveling. Sid was the kind of person that you never forget.

Rachel Germain - June 08, 2020 at 05:31 PM

AH

“ Sid and I were best friends at the old Lookout Junior High School in St. Elmo, then at Baylor for our three years there, and were roommates our freshman year at Vanderbilt. We somewhat went our separate ways after Vanderbilt, Sid to the Air Force and me to the Navy. We reconnected after our military stints when I was working in Worcester, Mass. and Sid was attending Boston University - He actually lived with my wife and I for several months until he found a place of his own on the South Shore of Boston. Work, family, and life in general caused a divergence in our life paths after that, but I will always have fond memories of Sid and the great times we had together growing up!

Alex Henderson

Alex Henderson - June 07, 2020 at 02:38 PM

CL

“ I first met Sid at Contra dances, and spent many a weekend at Split Tree Farm camping, dancing, cooking in the kitchen, playing music and having grand fellowship with everyone. I have many good memories there. I so appreciate all that Sid did for the dance community. We will miss him. May the spirit of Split Tree Farm and Sid live on in our hearts.

Cherry Lemonds - June 06, 2020 at 11:00 PM

DJ

“ I first met Sid in a communications/pr class he taught for continuing education at UTC in the mid 70's. Our paths continued to cross as we were both involved in the Arts. Twenty some years later I had the pleasure of renting him the rehearsal hall and stage at the Tivoli Theatre for community dance gatherings when we had open dates. A gifted teacher, gracious gentleman and wonderful sense of humor. So sorry for your loss.

David E. Johnson

DAVID E JOHNSON - June 06, 2020 at 07:51 PM

AG

“ I only met Sid when I got to Atlanta in 2006, but I could tell he was a special and dynamic person. Unfortunately I missed it all at Split Tree; it burned shortly after I got here. I also felt an affinity with him since we were born on the same day, October 1st Libras, (different year of course). We are all mortal, but sometimes it hits us harder when it happens to someone with such stature and positive people energy. One can feel the loss...Alan

Alan Gordon - June 04, 2020 at 06:53 PM

TM

“ So sorry. Sid and I had been close friends since about 1962. We were roommates in the Air Force. Did a ski trip to Europe. We stayed in touch all these years. More recently he spent Christmas with us at our house for a couple of years in Blountstown, Fl. I visited with him during one of his house concerts less than a year ago. Late that evening after surveying the living room carnage, he leaned over to me and said "Would you take me out to get a hamburger". Loved that, Sid.

Travis and Karen MacClendon - June 04, 2020 at 11:23 AM

SH

“ Sid was the father of the Chattanooga Traditional Dance Society, holding dances in the 90's renting the Tivoli Theater and dancing on stage. The dancing paused for a short time and Sid was supportive of the new organization. He facilitated mini dance weekends on 5th Saturday's providing Split Tree Farm free of charge for Saturday night and Sunday morning breakfast.

Sid asked Vicki to call her first dance weekend at STF leading to years of traveling to calling gigs.

My first dance weekend catering gigs were at STF, after mentioning my prior food service experience to Sid. This lead to meeting Harriett Bugle and years of traveling to feed he dancing masses.

Sid helped set the path for the 25 years of our lives.

Steve Herndon

Steve Herndon - June 04, 2020 at 08:34 AM

“We're fools whether we dance or not, so we may as well dance.”
(motto of Sid Hetzler's "Fools Fest Dance Weekend")

One of the most mesmerizing aspects of Sid's multi-faceted life was his strong belief in the power of “intentional community.” He frequently talked about his idea that, by creating a physical and creative space in which people from diverse backgrounds could come together to explore the concept of ‘community,’ Split Tree Farm could become a powerful incubator for human growth, happiness, and wellbeing. Because of that, the dance hall and cabins that the Atlanta dance community helped him to build on his family farm – re-named “Split Tree” after a particularly violent lightning storm -- were simply a means to an end; a way of drawing people of all ages and backgrounds to the North Georgia mountains where they could collect, collaborate, and create. The weekends that Sid hosted were a merry mix of contra, waltz, squares, tango, swing, contact improv, and other styles. They could also be life changing -- I met my husband at Fools Fest Dance Weekend 2003.

Sid started his dance events at nearby Hidden Hollow before moving them to his farm. But even before the hay barn fire that leveled the house and attached dance hall Sid had already extended his concept of intentional community to venues in Atlanta where he hosted events in rented spaces. A particular favorite were his Sunday afternoon Waltz dances at Several Dancers Core in downtown Decatur. In keeping with his philosophy, those afternoons were about far more than just learning how to waltz – they also included time set aside each week for discussions on the history and use of dance as a form of group and individual communication and collaboration and a weekly challenge to apply the lessons of waltz to one's everyday life.

Sid's events didn't just make us better dancers, they made us better people.

-Kimbi Hagen

Kimbi Hagen - June 03, 2020 at 09:21 PM

TM

So sorry. Sid and I had been close friends since about 1962. We were roommates in the Air Force. Did a ski trip to Europe. We stayed in touch all these years. More recently he spent Christmas with us at our house for a couple of years in Blountstown, Fl. I visited with him during one of his house concerts less than a year ago. Late that evening after surveying the living room carnage, he leaned over to me and said "Would you take me out to get a hamburger". Loved that, Sid.

Travis and Karen MacClendon - June 04, 2020 at 08:04 AM

FC

“ I am deeply saddened by the loss of Sid. He is best remembered by me and our contra dance crowd from memories of the beautiful and amazing Split Tree Farm that he built and that was home to many dance festivities. We will always dearly remember him. Many condolences to his family. Rest in peace, dear Sid, and continue dancing at your beloved Split Tree Farm above.

Fay Campbell - June 03, 2020 at 08:42 PM

LJ

“ I loved dancing with Sid in Atlanta. Such a kind person. He will be missed.

Linda James - June 03, 2020 at 05:34 PM

JM

“ I will be forever grateful to Sid for opening up Split Tree farm every fall and spring for Richard Powers' Waltz Weekends. Spending the weekend twirling around the barn/dance studio, with the amazing view of Lookout Mountain, and the generous spirit created by Sid was extremely special. Sid truly made the world a better place!

Jennifer Mizenko - June 03, 2020 at 02:28 PM