

I grew up with Hoover but it wasn't until my first time in Southwest Harbor Maine, that I heard someone refer to him as "little Scotty Wilder". For some reason, that stuck with me. Sometimes I would even answer his phone calls by saying to him it's little Scotty Wilder!

Well, little Scotty Wilder wasn't so little at all, figuratively speaking. He left a big impression on me and I think most of us. He made me a better person. Hoover was the bond for so many friendships in Westport and I'm grateful that the friends who remained in the area were always there for Hoover. Any time I called to check in on Hoover, someone was usually there hanging out with him, Dana, Ules, Geady, Peter and Dale, Clarky, T, Johnny, Karen, Pete the Canadian, Coop, Cash, Moon, Nazz, Reynolds, Al, Squires, Chip, Buck and Kim, Mark and Jeanne, Mike and Cindy, Tommy, Matt and Mary Ellen, and on and on and on. I usually had to start out the conversation by asking if I called at a bad time! The "dream team" golf group worked their magic the last couple of years for Hoover in the annual policeman's tournament. Hoover was their honorary captain every year. The most excited I ever heard Hoover on the phone was describing "the putt" Johnny made for the win last year, not only was it on the last hole, but also the last man to putt for the team. So even though I wasn't around for a lot of what was happening in Hoover's life, I felt I was still a part of it from my regular conversations with him.

I don't think it has sunk in yet for me that Hoover's gone...but then I think, he'll always be with us, I'll always be thinking of him. When I left the hospital on the Friday Hoover passed away, I drove to the Norwalk car wash because I knew my car wasn't up to Hoover's standards for the Wilder's driveway. After the car wash, I decided to take a drive through Longshore, which was part of Hoover's routine if you were driving around with him in his van. It just seemed like the right thing to do. After Longshore, I continued to the beach, did one loop, slowed way down on beach road, which again was part of the routine. In fact, with Hoover you could never go slow enough. The only thing I didn't do, which was part of the routine, was to go back through the beach and do it all over again. As I approached Manitou road from South Compo, I made sure to put my turn signal on just past Longshore and well in advance of the turn onto East Ferry Lane, another Hoover mandate when you were driving his van. When I mentioned my drive back from the hospital to Sandy, he told me he and Nancy did the same thing, less the car wash. So like I said, Hoover hasn't really left us.

He was my best man (even though he was a no show) and best friend, and I will miss him dearly. But at the same time I'm thankful that Hoover had Milo, Sandy, family, so many friends and especially Nancy...as Hoover would say, you were tremendous!

I learned from Hoover that no matter what life deals you, the most important thing is to have family and friends to help get you through. Hoover was fortunate he had that, and then some. He knew it, and along the way, made all of our lives better.

As everyone knows, Hoover loved his music and especially sharing it with others. As I was driving back home to Skaneateles last week, I played some CDs Hoover made for me. In the beginning, he labeled the CDs Mogeys' Music or Mogeys' Sessions, usually an assortment of jazz and blues. But the last few years he came out with a new series called The Long Road. Again, a sampling of our kind of music. I listened to Long Road I, II, III, IV and V, which got me into my driveway 5 hours later. I like to think Hoover may have been trying to tell us his life ended up on a long road, and despite some bumps along the way, he had a great ride.

I'm sad that he's gone but happy he's out of his wheelchair, probably boating right now with Milo on the NAN SEA II.

I'll see you later Hoove.