

was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Roller Skating Association International. He was also given the 2014 Award of Excellence for Outstanding Commitment and Service by the Amusement & Leisure Defense Association. His motto was, "Isn't it time to start working on your business instead of in it?"

He was one of the founding members of "Kids Skate Free," a nonprofit organization which gives all kids the opportunity to skate at no cost.

Bill had a zest for his life and his work that knew no bounds. His greatest joy was teaching people how to have fun. Bill played ice hockey in college and was a season ticket holder for the Los Angeles Kings for 35 years. He was thrilled when he finally got to see them win two Stanley Cups.

Bill was kind and thoughtful, always giving of himself and expecting nothing in

return. He was passionate about his family, his life and his work and had grace beyond measure. His greatest pride was his children and grandchildren.

Bill is survived by his children Jonathan Carlson of Sunset Beach, Calif.; Tami Carlson and husband Geoff Towle of Sebastopol, Calif.; Grady Carlson of Weymouth, Mass.; and Jody Carlson and wife Brooke Begay of Steamboat Springs, Colo. In addition, Bill leaves grandchildren Charlotte, Dylan, Kamden, Ava and Brooklyn. He is also survived by siblings Richard Carlson and his wife Carol of Negaunee, Mich; Ray Carlson and his wife Carolynne of Ironwood, Mich; Jesse Carlson and his wife Kathy; and Barbara Smith of Racine, Wisc. He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife Ava.

Donations may be made to: UW-L Foundation, Bill Carlson Scholarship at UW-La Crosse, P.O. Box 1148, La Crosse, WI, 54602.



Bill, with Don Perkins, pose with Mickey and Minnie at the 1998 RSA Convention at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort Orlando

The roller skating industry responds to the loss of Bill Carlson:

"Bill was the premiere consultant in the roller skating industry and he shared his information freely. He allowed others to experience and grow success by sharing what others had learned and experienced. We attended a number of his U-profit seminars and found them to be highly beneficial for progressive rink operators."
 – Bob Sietsema, General Manager of Great Skate, Glendale, Ariz.

"I feel that anyone that did not choose to be present at one of Bill Carlson's U Profit Seminars at least once missed out on having access to some of the latest ideas and trends in the Skating business. When Jo Ann and I returned from Bill's first seminar, we immediately remodeled our restrooms -- doubled the lighting and added new stall dividers, new pain, and new toilet seats. Going to one of Bill's seminars was like being continually motivated to keep giving top customer service. Now we have lost the inspiration of Bill Carlson. We really appreciated him and will always remember how much he cared." – Luther Bernstein, InterSkate (and LowPriceSkates.net), Lewisville, Tex.

"Bill was the quintessential ambassador to the world for roller skating. His enthusiasm, dedication and knowledge put him in a league of his own - an irreplaceable positive force and friend to so many! We were privileged to know him and will all greatly miss him." – Jim Dvorak, President/CEO of United Skates of America

"Bill was the greatest mentor I could have ever asked for. He helped me fulfill my dream and was definitely a staple in my facility. I can't look around and not see him. We talked a lot on the phone. We had big plans and big dreams. He is going to be missed and had a huge impact on our industry." – Shauna Grammatico, owner/operator of Epic Rollertainment, Murrieta, Calif.

"Bill was a good friend and mentor. He was one of the most optimistic people I have ever known. His influence upon our industry helped us stay ahead of the ever increasing competition for family entertainment and recreation. We lost one of our greatest spokesmen for roller skating." – David Fleming, Skateland Enterprises, Northridge, Calif.

"I've never known anyone more generous with his time than Bill Carlson, and he took great pleasure in sharing helpful information and creative ideas with anyone who needed them! Everyone who knew Bill was grateful for the opportunity. His passion was a constant and reliable shot in the arm, and his enthusiasm for life truly lit up the room!" – Linda Katz, Publisher, The RINKSIDER

 A wide-angle photograph of a roller skating rink at night. The floor is a vibrant blue with a large, intricate graphic in the center. The graphic consists of concentric, diamond-shaped patterns in yellow and red. The rink is surrounded by a dark wooden barrier, and the background shows some blurred lights and structures, suggesting an indoor or outdoor arena setting.

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