



Mr. Frank Artemus Hemphill

August 19, 1939 - March 4, 2017

Frank Artemus Ward Hemphill, Jr., 77, of Kalamazoo, MI, formerly of Lafayette, LA, passed away March 4, 2017 after a brave battle with cancer. He was born and raised in Lafayette to Frank Artemus Hemphill, Sr. and Alida du Bois.

He attended Western Michigan University and received a Bachelor of Arts as well as a Master of Science in Librarianship. In 1961, he joined the Air Force and served with distinction for seven years before being honorably discharged. He began work as the City Librarian of Portage, MI in 1966, work he was particularly proud of. After faithfully devoting 31 years of his professional career to the Portage District Library, he was awarded the title of Founding Librarian in 2013.

In his later years he traveled frequently with his partner in their motor coach, visiting family across the country and spending time in Florida. He took great joy in walking his dogs and reading a good book.

He is survived by his partner of 20 years, Robert McCormick; his five children: Elizabeth and Samuel Harper-Hemphill, Katlynn, Samuel, and William McCormick; his grandson, Logan McCormick; his sister, Mona Hollier, and many beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins. He was preceded in death by his sister Maxine Bonnet. A Memorial Service will be held 12 Noon Saturday,

March 11, 2017 at the Portage District Library, 300 Library Lane in Portage, MI 49002.

*****IN LIEU OF FLOWERS, the family requests that memorial donations be made to the Portage District Library or to the Prairie View Dog Park (please address checks to the: KALAMAZOO TREASURER and mail donations to the: KALAMAZOO COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT, 2900 Lake Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49048).

Previous Events

A Memorial Service In Loving Memory Of

MAR 11. 12:00 PM (ET)

Portage District Library
300 Library Lane
Portage, MI 49002

Tribute Wall



“ Harper Funeral Home created a Tribute Video in memory of Mr. Frank Artemus Hemphill



Harper Funeral Home - March 11, 2017 at 11:52 AM



“ *Mr. Frank Artemus Hemphill*

October 23, 2023 at 06:06 AM



“ *Mr. Frank Artemus Hemphill*

October 06, 2023 at 10:42 AM

SA

“ I had the great, good fortune to have worked for Frank for 10 years. He hired me about the time I got my BA in history, religion and library science from Western. I was green and didn't even know what shelf reading was when he put me in charge of the pages at then Portage Public Library. Frank taught me and encouraged me in all of my efforts as Children's Librarian.

Frank always said he wasn't a creative person, but he knew how to hire creative people. I think we made a great team for the years we were the only two librarian in the old store front library. I'm sure the fire marshal would have passed out when we crowded over 150 people in the library for Halloween Story Times. Frank would tell the one story he knew - Mr. Miacca - to a rousing applause from parents and children, no matter how many times they heard it.

I was often asked to be a guest on WKZO's Channel 3 Clubhouse and the daytime talk show. Sometimes it would be very short notice if a scheduled guest would cancel. Frank always told me to go and often, for the talk show, join me on camera. He was nervous and didn't talk much, but always a presence.

I was on the committee the year Frank won Michigan Librarian of the Year. The chair of the committee gave me the honor of telling Frank he had won the award. Frank was on his way to a board meeting and said he couldn't talk. I just told him it wouldn't take long and told him the news. Not much ever stunned Frank, but this time he was almost speechless. I was also given the honor to give the introduction for the new Michigan Librarian of the Year at the MLA luncheon. I did pretty good right up until the end where I almost lost it. Frank was always, gracious and humble, in his acceptance of the award.

In many ways Frank was my hero. He was funny, kind, smart and supportive. We kept in contact after I left Portage and I have always been grateful for his generous spirit. He gave me the room to be creative, and along with other staff members, build children's and

young adult programs that give the kids in the community a positive view of the public library. I will miss him very much.

Sally Arrivee

Sally Arrivee - March 13, 2017 at 09:46 AM