



Bruce Miller

“If you knew Bruce, you liked him. He was a real people person - a father, a husband, a brother, a son, a very competitive athlete, a leader and most of all, a friend”, says Matt Levar of his longtime pal Bruce Miller. If you ask anyone who knew him if Bruce will be missed, you might be surprised when answered with a vintage Bruce question; “Do fat babies have gas?”

Bruce was born on January 17, 1960 in Lemmon, South Dakota to Johnny and Florence Miller. His father worked in road construction, ran an A&W restaurant for a time, and eventually went to work for UPS. His mother Florence took care of the family and also worked a variety of jobs outside the home including work at Wheeler Manufacturing, a leading jewelry supplier. Bruce was soon joined in Lemmon by two siblings, sister, Roxanne and a brother, Steve. Steve finds it rather ironic that one of Bruce’s trademarks growing up was

Right: Heather, Danette, Cory, Sabra, and Bruce in the Black Hills (2011)



that he was often seen sporting an engineer's hat. Nothing in his upbringing explained this fashion choice. Was it a foreshadowing of his long term association with rail transportation, or did Bruce just like the look?

A far cry from today's craze of internet dating, Bruce met his future wife Danette Ham when they were just kids. Danette was a farm girl whose family lived at Shadehill, just south of Lemmon. When the local Catholic School closed its doors in 1972, Bruce transferred to the 6th grade at Lemmon Elementary where Danette was already a student. They didn't start dating until their senior year in high school where Bruce ran cross country, played football and basketball and Danette was on the cheerleading squad. After high school they both went off to Northern State College in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Bruce studied business, but left after two years to find work in the area. Danette continued on to finish her four-year degree. On June 5, 1982 they were married surrounded by family and friends at Calvary Lutheran Church in Lemmon. It was not surprise to anyone that the groomsmen all wore engineer's hats to the reception!

A Wonderful Life

As most young couples do, they headed off to start a new life, not knowing exactly what the future would bring, but confident that they could tackle it happily together. They ended up in Gillette, Wyoming. The boondocks to some, but when you are from Lemmon, with a population of less than 2,000, then, not so much. As it turned out, Gillette would be their home for the next 24 years. There they built a life that became richer and fuller, and, of course, busier by the minute as they welcomed daughters Heather and Sabra and son Cory.

One of the first people Bruce and Danette crossed paths with in Gillette was Matt Levar, currently the Director of Sales for Westmoreland Coal Company. Matt recalls:

"I met Danette in 1982 when she was the administrative



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assistant to the mine manager at the new Mobil mine, Caballo Rojo, located 20 miles south of Gillette. Danette left the mine some time later and became a loan officer in Gillette. I first met Bruce when he worked at the Cordero mine that was adjacent to Caballo Rojo. We would communicate with each other from time to time when either of us needed parts and materials to keep our respective coal processing plants running. It was later that I found out that Bruce was married to Danette.

In 1996, the Caballo Rojo mine was bought by Kennecott Energy (Rio Tinto), the owner of the Cordero mine. Our lives were thrown together to transition the two mines into one, the Cordero Rojo mine. Many hours were spent bringing the two plant work forces together into one functional unit.

Bruce was a straight forward guy. No fancy words, “no beating around the bush” just straight talk. As the plant manager he led his team with passion to accomplish the highest standard

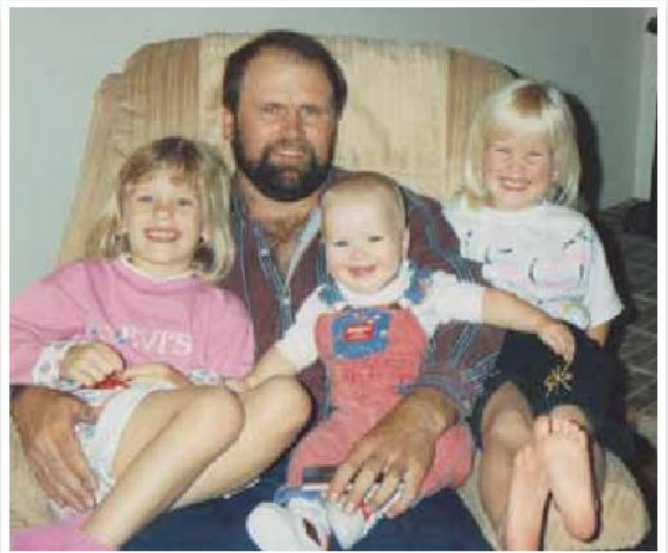


Bruce and Danette are engaged! (1982)

of performance. He involved everyone to optimize safety and production. As a coal sales person, he was extremely creative, energetic and a very social person. He knew the value chain well from the mine, to the railroad to burning the coal.”

Through hard work and dedication, Bruce worked his way up the company from his initial job on the maintenance crew, to bottom loading cars, to topping them off, to plant manager, and finally into the marketing area. Danette credits Matt Levar and Kelly Cosgrove, Kennecott’s then Vice President of Marketing, Government, and Public Affairs for giving Bruce an opportunity in the marketing group.

In early 2006, the marketing group of Rio Tinto relocated from Gillette to Greenwood Village, just south of Denver. For Bruce, who always put family first and planned his travel accordingly, the timing could not have been better. Heather had graduated from Montana State University—Billings and Sabra had just graduated from high school. Cory was just getting started



Heather, Bruce, Cory, and Sabra in 1992

in high school and was game to move. The family settled in to a new routine in Parker. Danette took a break from full time work to aid in the transition. Bruce was delighted to discover that while the Colorado school year starts in mid-August, the kids get a week-long break in early October – the perfect time to take Cory back home for a hunting trip.

A Band of Brothers

In late 2007, Rio Tinto’s decision to divest itself of its US coal assets put Bruce and three co-workers on two-year journey involving four companies doing business out of four different locations in the Denver area. Bruce, along with Rick Pieper, Matt Levar and Jeff Price, had been working with Lehman Brothers on an arrangement to expand Rio Tinto’s successful trading operation around its assets. The deal was put on hold while Rio Tinto sought to divest the coal assets. Lehman recognizing the brains behind the operation were more valuable than the assets, offered the four a package deal to come aboard. While there was talk of both a spinoff using an IPO and a selling the properties outright, the sale brought the risk of consolidation and layoffs so the four left Rio Tinto in early 2008, opening an office in Lone Tree.

By September, Lehman Brothers was bankrupt as were so many others involved in the subprime mortgage crisis. The four landed at Eagle Energy Partners (Eagle) and in a new office in Littleton. They continued to work under the Eagle name until late 2009, in spite of the fact Eagle had been acquired by the European firm EDF Trading in October of 2008. Once brought under the EDF Group global brand, the group relocated to Englewood. The Cloud Peak Energy IPO finally happened in November of 2009, about three quarters of the way through this journey. In June of 2010, the coal marketing business of EDF Trading North America, and along with it the “band of brothers”, was acquired by Enserco Energy, the unregulated marketing subsidiary of Black Hills Corporation. Their new digs, in case you were wondering, were located on Wynkoop Street in downtown Denver. While it makes one wonder how many mornings Bruce could have woken up wondering who he worked for and where the office was, one thing always remained the same – his

cell phone number. Bruce made sure that family, friends, and business associates never had to worry about losing touch.

Need Another Brother?

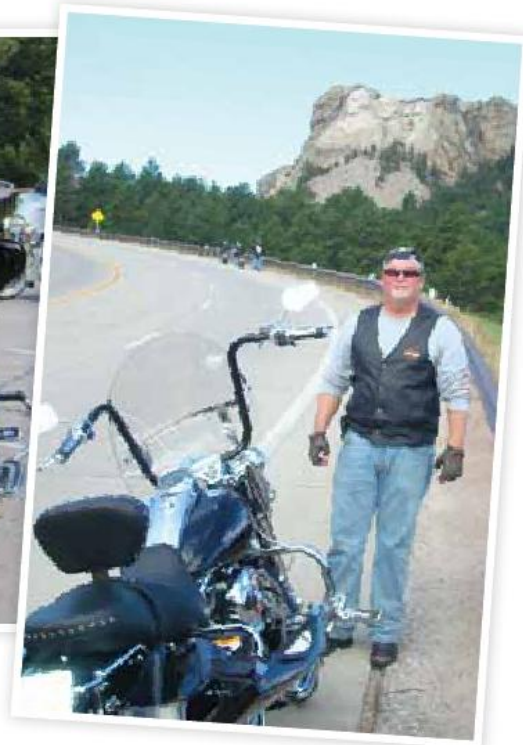
As a marketer, Bruce's people skills were evident. Because he was such a genuine guy, calling them "skills", somehow just doesn't seem right. John Nyquist's chronicle of meeting and getting to know Bruce is the perfect illustration. John is the Purchasing Manager for Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative in Wahpeton, North Dakota.

"Bruce Miller was a great friend, when he called on our company we would always manage to get in at least one or two rounds of golf. Bruce was pretty modest, you would not think

make sure to invite Bruce over and make lasagna for him. I would occasionally be invited as well. Bruce was the type of person that everyone who ever met him took an immediate liking to. My parents especially looked forward to every time Bruce would be in town, and would make sure to invite him over for dinner or just to stop by and say hello if he had time."

John's experience was not unique among Bruce's customers. He also managed to find some "adopted" sisters and maybe a cousin or two (or twenty) along the way. Amy Goodman, Manager, Production Fuels for the City Utilities of Springfield, recounts:

"Every time I think of Bruce I get a smile on my face. His smiles were contagious, so was his cheerful demeanor. Bruce



Bruce and his buddies at Mt. Rushmore, on one of his Harley road trips.

he was a good golfer but if you were to bet with him you would probably lose money because he was a very good player.

The first time I met Bruce was at the NCTA meeting on Victoria Island in British Columbia back in 2004. My wife and I went to a pub with Danette and Bruce for a nightcap and that is really when we started getting to know each other better. Of course anyone who knew Bruce knew he was an outdoorsman. When he heard about our fishing trips to Canada, he decided it was time for him to join in. We had several very successful trips fishing at the Hyatt's Manion Lake Camp in Ontario. It was definitely not the Hyatt style of resort you may be thinking of, but a very nice place for a group of guys to go fishing. Bruce fit into our group very well, there was always a bet every morning on who would catch the biggest Walleye and Bruce had his days with the largest now and then.

I will never forget the time when my folks picked him up at the Fargo airport. I was playing in a golf tournament that day and he came out onto the course to meet up with us and have a couple of beers of course. I asked him if he wanted to stay for dinner at the course after the tournament. Bruce said no, that my folks had invited him for lasagna which was news to me. Bruce, like anyone who had ever had my Mother's lasagna, fell in love with it, so every time he would come to town she would

was always such a gentleman and extremely kind-hearted, always placing others first. I remember a time in Colorado Springs at the Broadmoor's Golden Bee when a group of NCTA ladies, including myself, were waiting to get in. The Golden Bee only allows a certain number of people to occupy the establishment at any given time, so we had to wait until others left before we could enter. We are standing outside the doors when Bruce spots us from inside. Without skipping a beat, he gets all the patrons to chant with him, "LET THEM IN...LET THEM IN...LET THEM IN!" Bruce was always the life of the party and liked by everyone. He was witty too! I remember when I first met his wife, Danette. I told them that I was terrible with remembering names, but Bruce had a solution for that! He said, "Just remember, you bring da pole and I'll bring Danette." Needless to say, her name was never forgotten. I hope to live my life with as much enthusiasm as Bruce lived his. He is missed, but will never be forgotten."

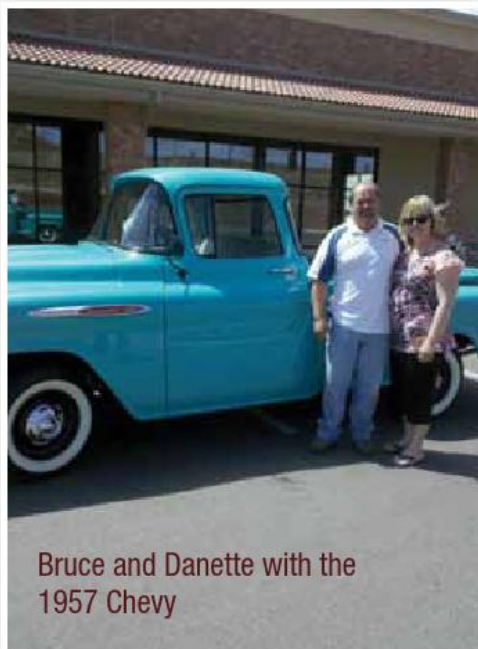
Family: First, Last, and Always

Bruce was known for putting others first. His wife Danette recalls that Bruce didn't live by Hallmark's calendar. That is not to say he ignored the traditional, but that he did not need a holi-

day to do something special like bring home flowers or give a gift. "Bruce was not one to go with the flow. He was his own person". Today, Danette wears a beautiful necklace given to her by her children this past Mother's Day with the simple word "love" in Bruce's own handwriting captured from the birthday card he gave her last year.

Jim Lynn, who knew Bruce for many years before they ended up as co-workers at Rio Tinto and later at Enserco, also knew this first hand. "Bruce always wanted others to enjoy themselves and he would go to great lengths to accomplish this goal. He was my biggest supporter at the racetrack. I had a horse racing at Arapahoe Park, and many friends and co-workers were coming to watch. Bruce organized a "tailgate party" at the track. He brought his motor home, grill, food, and drinks for 30+ people. He made sure he parked where everyone could eat, drink, and see the race. This was not an approved practice at the track, but after lengthy discussions with security, Bruce barbecued all day and entertained at the same time. Ensuring that everyone had a good time was important to Bruce no matter how much effort it took."

Doing something nice for Bruce was a bit more of a challenge as he was impossible to surprise. That was until his 50th birthday when Danette and the kids were able to surprise him not once, but twice! Bruce went off to Ft. Collins for a hunting



Bruce and Danette with the 1957 Chevy

trip thinking he was leaving Danette behind. Instead, she met up with their friends from Gillette and Farmington at a hotel in Ft. Collins. Bruce had two very loyal hunting companions in his labs Sage and Misty, so it was quite easy to talk him into stopping by one of the rooms to look at a puppy that his pal was considering training. After all, he, Jim Lynn, and Matt Levar spent many hours with Sage and Misty in special training areas at Quail Run, a hunting and fishing preserve in Kiowa, Colorado. To his great surprise, it was not a puppy but a party that he discovered when he entered the room. After having been surprised in Ft. Collins he was doubly surprised when he walked in on Surprise Party II back in Parker, especially since Danette was still with him.

Trains were not the only mode of transportation Bruce had affection for.

He regularly rode his Harley with friends, hitting the road in full gear. He was also the proud owner of a 1957 Chevy pick-up truck that he kept mainly because it reminded him of his dad. After the funeral mass that was held at Ave Maria Catholic Church in Parker in March, Cory thought it fitting to give his own father one last ride in the Chevy from the church to the top of the hill. It created an endearing moment in a final farewell.

Will Bruce be missed? Do fat babies do have gas?
Always. ▲

BRUCE AND I SHARED LOTS OF MEMORABLE TIMES TOGETHER

over the past 30 years as both friends and co-workers. Here is what BRUCE MILLER meant to me and, I'm sure, for several of you that knew him as well:

- B**est friend anyone could ever have
- R**eliable...the first one there if you needed anything
- U**nselfish in so many ways
- C**aring and giving
- E**veryone (family, friends, coworkers, customers) loved Bruce
- M**ost genuine person you will ever meet
- I**mpossible not to laugh when he was around
- L**oved life
- L**ots of fun
- E**njoyed the great outdoors
- R**est in Peace my dear friend.

Leslie Thorn, Cloud Peak Energy



Editor's Note: A special thank you to Amy Goodman, Matt Levar, John Nyquist, Jim Lynn, Leslie Thorn, and especially Danette Miller. Without their contributions, this article would not have been possible.