A black and white portrait of a young man with dark hair, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a light-colored shirt and a patterned tie. The background is a plain, light color.

LIFE

Stories

Bill Sowder
Artist-In-Residence

BORN

JUNE 4, 1935

Bill's creative and joyful approach to life is an ongoing work of art... a masterpiece in the making.



Bill at 10 or 11 years old, visiting his Aunt and Uncle in Park Hills, Kentucky. The dog on the left is Sandy. The dog on right is Spotty.

Have you ever given thought to those defining moments that set or re-set the course of your life? Well, for Bill Sowder it could not be clearer. The inspiration from family and influence of a special teacher set him on his life course of becoming an artist, and the rest is history.

It was 1935. The Social Security Act was signed into law by FDR, and the "Dust Bowl" hit the Midwest. Babe Ruth retired and Jesse Owens broke 4 world track records. The first 'paperback' book was published, and Bill Sowder was born in Lexington, Kentucky.

Early Recognition

Raised by his Grandmother and Aunt, the constants in his life were love and discipline. At 5 years old, his kindergarten teacher, Miss Stella, had a profound influence that would shape the rest of his life. Little Bill had hand-crafted a tiny bird nest complete with a momma bird feeding her baby bird. The teacher was so impressed that she went to his house and encouraged his Grandmother to recognize and develop his artistic talent. That one event initiated a lifelong pursuit of art and ultimately launched a successful career.

A Vision of Things to Come

Throughout his youth, Bill's enthusiasm for art was spurred on by his cousin, Howard Bauer, who painted in oils. Bill was in awe of Howard's talent and his passion to do what he loved. Howard's regular visits and encouragement inspired Bill to attend the Central Academy of Art in Cincinnati, Ohio. He told Bill about successful cartoon artists such as Charles Schultz and Walt Disney. That planted a vision in Bill that reinforced his passion and clarified a new and commercial application for his talent.

Bill says he lived a kind of a fantasy life. Who knew you could do what you love and make money doing it? Well, for Bill the dream became reality as Art Director for several large Ad Agencies over his career. His creativity and business acumen got him there, but what set him apart was his artistic ability to illustrate his own story boards. The tales of his endeavors are funny and inspiring while leaving you wanting to know more. What impresses you most is that Bill remains humble and amiable. His favorite rewards are just common everyday affirmations, like "You're a good kid, Billy", or "Excellent drawings, Bill".

A Legacy of Pride and Joy

"A Hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove ... but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child."

Forest E. Witcraft,
Teacher and Scholar

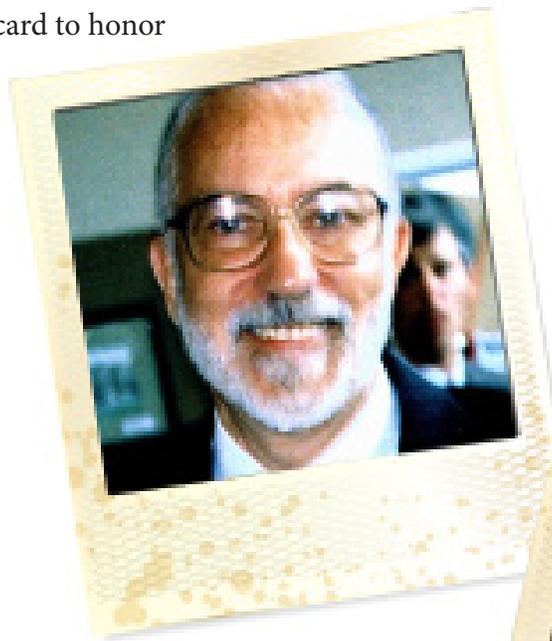
No quote could be more accurate. Bill's pride and joy are his two children and eight grandchildren. His son and daughter-in-law live in Michigan, and are both teachers and wonderful role models for their four children. His daughter and her husband have also given Bill four wonderful grandchildren, who live close by. Bill feels very blessed that he can watch his grandchildren grow up to be successful and productive adults.

Below is a small sampling of award-winning art direction developed over decades of living his 'fantasy life'.

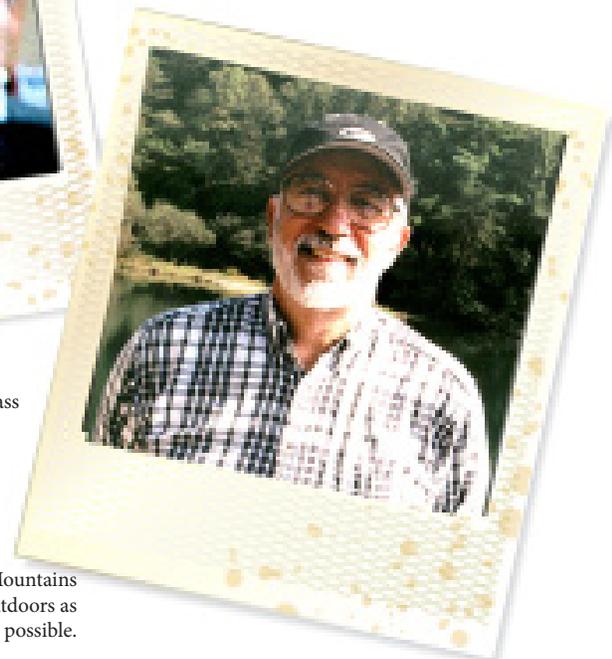


Quick Facts about Bill Sowder

- Bill moved around a bit, living in Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois, and Georgia
- After high school, Bill worked in a butcher shop before heading off to college
- His first car was a 1936 Plymouth for which he paid a whopping \$45 dollars
- While in the military, he almost burned down the Mess Hall ... you know that made for some unhappy marines
- As Art Director he worked on some major advertising campaigns for some very large corporations: Campbell Soup; Delta Airlines; McDonald's; and Ralston Purina
- Bill's fondest memory was when he designed a congratulatory card to honor the new President of Campbell Soup Canada. Bill's creative design was selected to represent the advertising agency and Campbell Soup USA.



Bill attended his Holmes High School, class reunion in 2001 in Covington, Kentucky.



Camping at a lake in the Smokey Mountains with his best friend, Bill enjoyed the outdoors as much as possible.