

Every face has a story and this is “Bill’s”



THE SCOOP

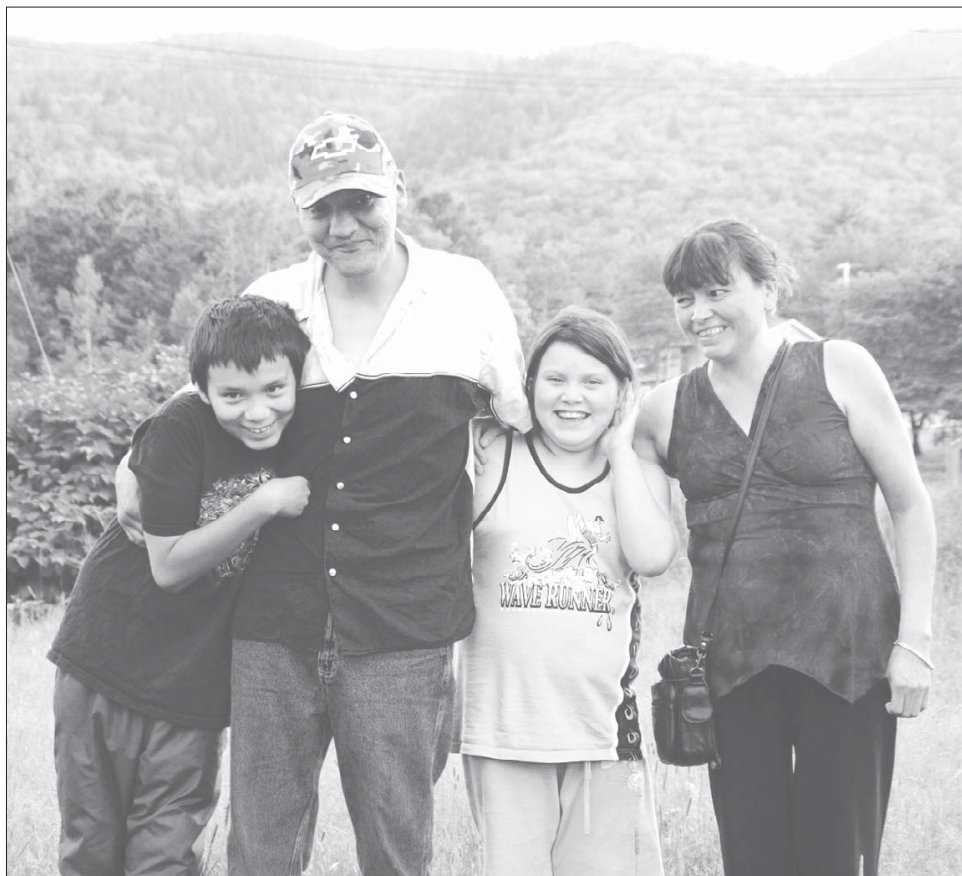
MABLE HASTINGS

Every face, name and lifetime has a story and this is Bill’s. I remember the year my brother died: 1979 and my wondering if anybody seeing his photo would know who he really was or if he would just be a face in the paper with a tragic story, there one day and forgotten the next. As a family member, this thought made me sad and that is why, in hearing about the passing of my friend’s son, I feel compelled to tell you his story.

William John Nicholas (formerly Bill Parkes) was born June 9, 1969 making him a Gemini a sign which refers to duality, compassion and communication. I remember seeing Bill for the first time in the late 1980’s when I first started working for the CABMN (then Citizen Advocacy) where I worked with his Mom, Murielle Parkes. Bill had beautiful long, shiny black hair, sported a leather jacket and looked like a rock star of sorts. The years between then and now have passed quickly and I rarely saw him but his adoptive mom kept me up to speed. Bill left us on July 23, 2018.

William (Bill) Nicholas, We’koqma’q First Nation, passed away at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital, Sydney, NS, son of the late John Noel and Julia (Clair) Nicholas. He was also the beloved adopted son of the late John Parkes and Murielle Parkes, dear brother to Deborah, the late Penelope, Daniel (Mary), and James. Bill had found a devoted partner Lucille Bernard, and the two had a family of their own, children Ayrton and Julia Nicholas. Other family members include stepson Randy Alex, seven sisters, one brother, numerous nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews – in We’koqma’q (Whycocomagh), Pictou Landing, Eskasoni and Elsipogtog.

Bill was one of some-20,000 aboriginal children in Canada removed from family and community during the “Sixties Scoop,” the large-scale removal of Indigenous children from their homes, communities and families of birth through the 1960s – 1980s, and placed in non-native homes. At the age of six, Bill came to live with his adoptive family in St. Lambert, Quebec. Prior to



William John Nicholas (formerly Bill Parkes) and his family

that, Bill had lived in four foster homes and had previously been unsuccessfully adopted. These experiences as well as growing up in a non-Indigenous family and community had heartbreaking impacts on his emotional and ultimately his physical health. Upon reflection, he’d often say: “I’m like an apple, red on the outside, white inside.”

In 1990, he travelled with his older (adopted) sister to visit his birth family. Bill never returned. Unlike the vast majority of First Nations children removed from their homes, he was able to reclaim his Indigenous roots and family name, eventually relocating first to New Brunswick and later to Nova Scotia.

Bill was the youngest of a family of 13 children. His parents had died, but he was able to reunite with all but one of his 12 siblings, as well as with numerous cousins and other family members. “Bill didn’t have a family tree,” mused his Mom Murielle Parkes. “He had a family forest.”

For many years, Bill struggled with health and quality-of-life issues, which he recounted in a video documentary – <https://mawitamk.org/our-stories/> – presented by Mawita’mk House – a supported living home in Whycocomagh for Mi’kmaq with disabilities where he lived for his past three years.

On dialysis for the last eight years, Bill experienced various complications and was often in pain. He was 49 at the time of his death, the result of long-standing complications of diabetes,

diagnosed when he was 21.

“We extend a sincere thanks to all at Mawita’mk House, with special mention to Shauna Mackinnon, his support worker and good friend who regularly drove him to dialysis and special events,” shared Parkes.

“I got to know him well,” said Mackinnon. “He’d often talk about his life in Quebec, how much he learned as a member of the Parkes family, and cars! He loved cars! Most of the conversations we had while driving were about cars and fixing them!”

Let William John Nicholas “Bill Parkes” be a reminder that every face and name has a story to tell. This was Bill’s.



PHOTOS COURTESY

William John Nicholas “Bill Parkes”

Ask The Pastor - Rev. Tim Wiebe, St. Paul’s, Knowlton

St. Paul’s @ Night
Saturday, September 15
at 7 p.m.



“The time’s they are a changin’” said Bob Dylan.

Little did he know how much!

I heard a quote recently that said that this present generation has experienced more change than the past 400 generations. If the printing press in 1439 signaled the last revolution, the internet has been an exponentially greater revolution.

And yet... is humanity any further ahead? Have we really improved at the same rate as our technology? Are we happier? Are we kinder? Are our relationships better? Are we more at peace with ourselves and others?

We know more than we did, but are we more than we were?

One thing we do know is that Sunday morning church is a tough sell after a late Saturday night. So we would like to invite you and your friends to check out St. Paul’s @ Night. A different kind of church time. We are an increasingly visual society, so we will be using video to help us ask and explore some of the deeper questions of life.

Check out our new Facebook page, St. Paul’s @ Night and try us out on Saturday, September 15 at 7 p.m.

We hope to see you then,
St. Paul’s Knowlton
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stpaulsknowlton@gmail.com



Facebook LIVE - You can also check out a live stream of our services on our Facebook page St. Paul’s Knowlton.

All Welcome! Bienvenue à tous!

ÉGLISE ST. PAUL’S CHURCH

24 St. Paul, Lac Brome

Info: 450 242-2885