



Riding with the Blue Moth

Bill Hancock

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Bill Hancock led a charmed life. He married his high-school sweetheart. He had two successful sons and a beautiful grand-daughter. He ran the NCAA men's basketball tournament. In the ascension of his career of college athletics, he moved within the echelons of the top sports figures in the world. On January 27, 2001, everything changed: a small Oklahoma State University airplane crashed in a snowstorm. Ten people died that evening; one of the passengers was Bill's son, Will Hancock. Bill and his wife, Nicki, coped with how to survive the loss. Yet, they knew that they had to go on living for one another, for their marriage, as well as for their son, Nate, for Will's wife, Karen, and for their young grand-daughter, Andrea. Bill, who had run 15 marathons, chose to bicycle across the United States in an effort to confront his grief, head-on. He and Nicki started the journey in Huntington Beach, CA and concluded at Tybee Island, GA. Ultimately, the 2,747-mile journey from the Pacific to Atlantic coasts, became something much more important than a cycling trip of coping. It became a journey in discovery as well as one of recovery. RIDING WITH THE BLUE MOTH (Publication Date: June 2, 2015; ISBN: 978-1-936946-57-0; Price: \$17.95; Nautilus Publishing) is part-memoir, part-travelogue, and part-homage to a son, whose life was taken from him, in a short moment in time. It is a story of example, of how a person can recover from tragedy, and loss, and then find peace and stability. On his journey, Bill battled searing heat and humidity, aggressive dogs, unforgiving motorists and dead armadillos. As he rode, his thoughts continued to return to two common points: Will being gone forever and the prospect of how their family would move forward. As he rode across the country on his bike, he began to term his grief the "blue moth," riding on his shoulder, as he powered through nine different states and landscapes, as Nicki drove the highways before him to set-up for their evenings at camp-sites. The pesky "moth" that fluttered around Bill was a modified beaming lamp in an empty parking lot. Some suggested, before he hit the road, that he use medication instead of exercise; some suggested he get back to his job. Bill chose to battle his situation as an emotional journey, as an infantry soldier on a Cannondale bike. After 36 days, traveling through California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia, Bill put his foot in the Atlantic Ocean. He made the journey, and the "blue moth" remained on his shoulder, in the same way that his son always would remain in his heart. Yet, he had made it, both physically and emotionally, and he had proved to himself and anyone else who has suffered through grief, that people have the mettle to stand-up, dust-off, and get on with life, if they actually want it bad enough. RIDING WITH THE BLUE MOTH is an example of how a man was determined to beat-it, did it, and was brave enough to write about it in a way to inspire people, all people, who have faced challenges, head-on.

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