

Chuck Pils



I was raised in the northwest side of Chicago and learned to play softball in the concrete alley between city blocks. My Dad was a Chicago fireman and my mother was a stay-at-home housewife. My brother Bob was 3 1/2 years older. I loved all sports, especially baseball, and frequently went to not too distant Wrigley Field to watch my favorite team, the St. Louis Cards (my Dad loved the Cardinals after being enamored of the Gashouse Gang in the 30's . . . what the Hell, if they were good enough for him) pound

the hapless Cubs.

It all started like this, as reported in a birth announcement in the Emmetsburg, Iowa paper (my mother was from NW Iowa . . . I was born in Chicago in 1942).

"Dear Friends in Iowa: I am just a little man and here to stay. I was born January 30 on President Roosevelt's birthday. The nurses and doctors thought my name should be Franklin D., but my father had already chosen my name to be Charles Mathias (I later shortened this to Mat) Pils.

Best wishes to my grandfather, Nels Kallestad, at Rodman Iowa. I hope to see him soon and all the rest in Iowa.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Herman M. Pils"



My early hunting experiences consisted of shooting sparrows out of the back porch window with my Benjamin air rifle. My first touches of nature were family excursions to the Cook County Forest Preserve for picnics and trips to the Field Museum to view the many nature displays (especially the Hall of Africa). I did have two distinct advantages about

gaining "nature" experience over my city pals; my mother hailed from a farm in NW Iowa. I spent some entire summers there, when the family farm was thriving and vibrant and learned to hunt pheasants . My father was from Wausau and I had an uncle living along the Eau Claire River outside Wausau who was a hunter-fisher-trapper masquerading as a farmer. He took me on many hunting, fishing, and trapping jaunts and heavily influenced me to become a wildlifer.

Our family moved to Iowa from 1952, but moved back to Chicago in 1956; I graduated as a Theodore Roosevelt H.S. Rough Rider in 1959. From 1959-61, I attended the University of Illinois at downtown Navy Pier (the same place that is now an amusement park/restaurant emporium). I migrated downstate to Champaign-Urbana and was the first class to graduate out of the still-standing Assembly Hall in 1963 with a Zoology major. I felt strongly about getting a Master's degree, so continued my wandering southward to Carbondale, IL, where I became a bonafide Saluki and received an M.S. in Zoology (wildlife emphasis) at Southern Illinois University (SIU) in 1965.

I met my lovely wife Linda at SIU in 1965 (she has retired from teaching elementary schools in Madison and Middleton).



Linda and Chuck
1966

We have been married since 1968 and have 2 kids; Kristi,(who has 2 girls), lives in Ft. Mill, SC. My son Alan is married and lives in Missoula, MT. He works for the Kettle House Brewery (visit him for a free beer).



The Pils Clan at High Lake:

Alan (son), Chuck, Brian (son-in-law), Linda, Scarlett (grand-daughter) , Carson (grand-daughter), Kristi (daughter), and Ginger (daughter-in-law)



Alan and me on The Flathead River, Montana with a nice rainbow

I served in the U.S. Army Reserve from 1965-71 and moved to Madison in 1966. After graduation, I was in the fortunate position of seeking a job during a period when wildlife jobs were plentiful; some of my choices were: working in Florida with turkeys, Minnesota as a wildlife manager, or Newfoundland with moose. However I wanted to work in Wisconsin and got my first state job in 1965 working as a LTE warden in Marathon County with Harry Borner as my boss. Finally I wangled a permanent job with Lewie Posekany in 1966, with Wisconsin Conservation Department.

My DNR jobs (all based in Madison) were: Aquatic Biologist-1966-67; Wildlife Researcher-1967-80; Furbearer Specialist-Bureau of Wildlife Management (BWM)-1980-89; BWM Section Chief-1989-92 and Director-Bureau of Endangered Resources- 1992-99. I retired in 1999.



Kristi, Linda, and Alan with a Dick Thiel wolf in Douglas County
1982

In retrospect, I could not have had a better professional career. My first 13 years allowed me to experience wildlife up close by handling pheasants, red foxes, cottontails and deer. I then worked with furbearer management projects such as developing a trapper education program. Then it was on to wildlife management administration.

Finally, I shifted my emphasis from harvesting strategies to protecting endangered and non-game species from Karner blue butterflies to Trumpeter Swans.

In 1995, I came up with the idea of creating an endangered resources license plate (ERLP), and with the help of many staff and The Nature Conservancy (did you know that ex- Madison mayor Dave Cieslewicz drafted the legislation ?.....he was then a staffer for The Nature Conservancy), since its inception in 1995, the ERLP bill has generated millions of \$\$ for the ER program.

Linda and I have been fortunate to have traveled to many beautiful places in the world . We have seen a pride of lions feeding on a cape buffalo carcass 100 yards from our tent in the Serengeti National Park, observed Machu Picchu through the clouds in Peru, and viewed the 500 foot drop of Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

I have traveled to Cuba seven times and have worked in schools, met their biologists and educators, and have seen the natural beauty of this tropical island. Madison is great place to live!



My Cuban Teacher Friends, near Moron, Cuba
2011

I attend UWEX classes, fish trout , seek lunker bass on Madison lakes, bike with my DNR old-fart friends and enjoy diverse types of music from many Madison-based locales such as concerts on the square. I am especially fortunate to volunteer as the UW-Friends of The Arboretum travel rep. I have traveled with FOA tours to the Grand Canyon, Everglades, and Isle Royale, among others. This February, we will visit Yellowstone NP.

I continue to stalk upland game birds and an occasional deer with my lab Sadie. Linda and I have a cabin on High Lake, Vilas County, where we do all kinds of recreation.



Sadie, my lab, and me with a couple of roosters in South Dakota
2011