

FROM THE EDITOR

The Death of a Giant



BILL ZEHME, WHO DIED IN MARCH AT 64, was one of the great magazine writers of our time. He profiled Sinatra, Carson, Letterman, and so many other towering figures for the likes of *Rolling Stone* and *Esquire*. A Chicagoan, he also made his mark on this magazine. Ted Allen, a *Chicago* staffer before joining the original *Queer Eye* team, profiled him in 1996's "Bill Zehme Feels Your Pain," which you can now find on our website. More recently, Zehme came up with the concept for our monthly Backroom feature and handled the interviewing duties himself until cancer robbed him of that ability. And in 2017, with a mix of eloquence and brutal honesty, he wrote in our pages about coping with the disease that would ultimately take his life, in "What Cancer Taught Me," which I encourage you to read.

But what I will remember most about Bill is that he was a good friend. Emails and texts from him were treats to be savored, as he'd pour his heart and considerable skills into each one of them. The last time I saw him, before his illness made him a recluse, was at lunch at Green Street Smoked Meats. "Love you, man," he told me. And that was perhaps the biggest lesson I learned from him: Tell people what they mean to you before it's too late.

Terrance Noland
Editor in Chief

INSIDE PEEK



Ivan Brunetti

Food for Thought

IVAN BRUNETTI'S CARTOONS HAVE graced 17 covers of the *New Yorker* but never the front of his own city's magazine. So when *Chicago* design director David Syrek approached him about illustrating this month's cover, Brunetti did not hesitate. "I didn't even know what he wanted," says Brunetti, a professor at Columbia College. "I just agreed to it." That isn't to say it was easy. There were several "false starts," as he puts it, and at one point he was nearly ready to give up as he wrestled with questions of design and perspective in illustrating foodie road trips.



"Then I took a small sheet of paper about the size of a Post-it and just tried to clear my mind," he recalls. "I did it in like 10 seconds, and came up with

a way to get it all in there. It just kind of clicked." —NATHAN ANSELL

MAN OF VIRTUE

Contributing writer Mike Thomas was interviewing Erick Williams for this month's Backroom (page 108) when, midanswer, the chef bolted out the door of his restaurant, Virtue. Through the window, Thomas could see Williams, still wearing his white toque, schooling a child he'd seen walking across the outdoor tables. "He's all about making people better," Thomas says. "Sometimes he feels like he's coaching more than cheffing." —N.A.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (NOLAND) MICHAEL ZAJAKOWSKI; (ZEHME) CHRIS STRONG; (BRUNETTI, SKETCH) IVAN BRUNETTI