Wild Bill’s Coffeeshop
In The University of Iowa School of Social Work

321 North Hall
Iowa City, IA
Mon., Tues., Thurs. 8 am-8 pm

Please Visit:
www.billsackter.com
to learn more about Bill.

Interested in performing at Wild Bill’s?
Musicians, comedians, singers, poets etc. are
invited to perform Mon., Wed., Thurs.,
evenings. Contact Jefri Palermo at
jefri-palermo@uiowa.edu or 335-3750
to get on the schedule.

Get Involved!

A coffee shop that makes a difference.
Since 1975

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WILD BILL’S COFFEESHOP

“We serve a lot more than coffee...”
Who was Wild Bill?

Bill Sackter was born to Russian immigrant parents in 1913 in Minneapolis. When Bill was 7 years old, his father died and due to family poverty and his poor performance in school, Bill was placed in an institution in Faribault, MN. He lived there for 44 years, until residents were released to live in the community as part of the deinstitutionalization movement. In the early 1970’s a musician named Barry Morrow became friends with Bill after meeting him at a supper club where Barry’s wife was a waitress. They became friends and eventually, Barry became Bill’s guardian. When Morrow accepted a job at The University of Iowa School of Social Work, Bill joined him in Iowa City in 1975. Bill was given a job in the School by then-Director, Tom Walz.

Coffee...25¢

Bill was assigned the task of making coffee, and his sunny personality and harmonica playing earned him popularity among students and faculty members. Students had a contest to name the coffee shop which resulted in the name “Wild Bill’s.”

Although a cup of coffee is no longer 25 cents, Bill’s still stands in its original location. It is the social hub of North Hall and serves as a non-profit service learning project enabling students to interact casually with persons with disabilities.

Bill’s coffee shop operates with a staff of 14 adults with disabilities and many volunteers. In the fall of 2009, the coffee shop received a much needed renovation that made the kitchen wheelchair accessible.

Bill loved serving coffee to his friends.

Wild Bill’s Legacy

By being a friend to all he knew, Bill changed the perceptions many people have of those with disabilities. His energy and optimism inspired and touched the hearts of people around the world. In 1977, Bill was named Handicapped Iowan of the Year. In the years to follow, several films were made about his life:

- **Bill**, the movie, 1981. Nominated for three Emmys. Bill was played by Mickey Rooney.
- **Bill on His Own**, TV movie, 1983
- **A Friend Indeed**, 2008, a documentary by Lane Wyrick.

When Tom Walz retired as Director, he started a similar project called Uptown Bill’s, which is located at 730 S. Dubuque St. in Iowa City. The two coffee shops often collaborate and both seek to continue the empowering legacy of Bill Sackter.