



LONGDEN, Leonard 'George' (1967)

November 1, 1948 - November 21, 2022

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden passing of George Longden while travelling in Arizona. He was 74 years of age.

George was born and raised in Victoria, BC and graduated from Victoria High School in 1966. After a brief stint of logging and working as a mechanic, he completed his teaching degree at UBC in 1972. In that same year he married his first wife of four years, Micki Sterling.

In 1977 Karin Paul became his partner and together with her son, Leonard, they moved first to Campbell River

where George taught the High School automotive course. He also enjoyed many happy hours skiing, boating, fishing, and exploring remote beaches and local trails. In 1985 George, Karin and Leonard moved to a small farm in Grand Forks. They lived in a lovely old farmhouse by the Kettle River growing bountiful gardens and hay fields. Hiking, cycling, and golfing were a constant source of exercise and joy for George.

George worked with the Boundary School District first as a classroom teacher and then as a distant education teacher. He led the school district in developing home based and alternate classroom learning. During that time, he had a huge impact in improving educational access and success for many marginalized kids. He retired in 2008.

George loved his community and volunteered his skills and time. He led the community in the development of the Community Christmas dinner, which to this day serves hundreds of turkey dinners on Christmas day in Grand Forks. He was president of the Phoenix Foundation, which donated to many charitable projects in the community. George was passionate about trails and his leadership was responsible for the paved trails that grace the city. When Karin passed in 2014, he built her a memorial bench on the Black Train Bridge that overlooks the river.

In 2015 he met Laurie DeBray at the Bliss Cafe in Kelowna. They were married in 2016 in a beautiful ceremony at Guisachan Heritage Park in Kelowna, BC. George moved to Laurie's hillside home in the Mission area overlooking Okanagan Lake, where they spent many happy years. After moving to Kelowna, George also gave his time to the Kelowna Yoga House, the council at Bluebird Beach, and volunteering at the Kelowna ReStore.

George loved building things and his handiwork is evident all around their home. His 'to do' list always seemed to have upcoming projects. George and Laurie could often be found walking along the Mission Greenway with their dog, Toby, and George was a regular every morning at the Cedar Creek dog park. During the summer months Laurie and George could be found at many of the music festivals in southern

BC. They travelled extensively through Southeast Asia enjoying yoga, the food and the people. He and Laurie were on another journey of discovery to Mexico when he passed away.

Throughout his life George was known as a gentle, creative, and energetic man, always willing to lend a hand. He didn't miss a day without expressing a deep sense of gratitude for the many blessings in his life. There are wonderful memories of George with family, friends, and students. His spirit and wisdom will be deeply missed.

George was predeceased by his second wife, Karin, and by his daughter-in-law, Rebecca.

Left to mourn his passing and to celebrate his life are his wife Laurie, her children Curtis and Erin, George's son Leonard and his two sons, Sol and Louis, George's goddaughter, Satri (Cameron, Sienna, Kieran). George is also survived by his two sisters Jeanette Tidbury (Dave) and Anne Balcovec (George), his nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends in Canada and around the world.