

# Andrew Burt

JULY 16, 2021

After struggling for some time with various health complications, Andrew Burt passed away at Delta Hospital, with his dear wife, Glenna, his daughter, Heather (Paul), and son, Jim (Kelly) at his side. He was 87 years old. Throughout his life, Andy touched countless people with his compassion and kindness, his friendliness and gentle humour, his wisdom, his generosity, and his integrity. Those of us who knew and loved him are missing him terribly, but we're also profoundly grateful for the gift of his presence in our lives.



Condensing a life as long and full as Andy's into a few paragraphs is impossible. Here are some highlights ...

Andrew was born in Montreal, to John Burt, a coppersmith from Scotland, and Irene Burt (née Blackie), a musician and fifth-generation Canadian. Andrew's sister, Anne, was twelve when he came along, and in years to come, her sons, Don and Rob Shepherd, would be big fans of their young, athletic Uncle "Anew."

Andy spent his early childhood in the working-class neighbourhood of Maisonneuve, where, one day in 1941, he befriended the boy across the street, Wendel MacLean. Twenty-odd years later, Wendel played the bagpipes at Andy's wedding to Glenna Bates, the McGill Teaching College classmate who'd stolen his

heart. In the early summer of 2021, Wendel and Andy marked 80 years of friendship, while Andy and Glenna celebrated 63 years of loving partnership. Those lifelong bonds were entirely in keeping with Andy's character and values.

Through the 1960s and '70s, Andy brought his skills and empathy to a variety of professional roles in Montreal: he was a teacher in a multi-age program for children with disabilities, a grade 7 classroom teacher, a high school guidance counsellor and vice-principal, and an elementary school principal. At home, and on a multitude of family excursions, he and Glenna created a loving, supportive, fun, and enriching world for Heather and Jim. Scores of other kids in their neighbourhood benefitted from Andy's contributions to organized sports.

In 1978, Andy was recruited to coordinate the Richmond School District's brand-new French immersion program. The family packed up and moved across the country, to Tsawwassen, where Glenna's mother, brother, and sister-in-law had already settled. In the years that followed, Andy worked passionately to develop the immersion program and, more importantly, to support the students and teachers in his care. On the home front, he became "Uncie" to nephews Alan and Douglas and niece Mollie, whom he adored.

We think the nickname "Action Andy" came about with Andy's midlife running career, which advanced to the half-marathon level. But the name fit in many ways. After retiring from teaching in 1995, Andy enthusiastically embarked on new projects, all of them centred on helping others and building connections. For many years, he and Glenna fostered guide dog puppies for BC Guide Dogs (anyone who's lived with a young Lab knows the stamina and good humour required for that gig!).

Along with his good friend and former colleague Jim McPherson, he worked for Holland America cruise lines, greeting and assisting passengers at the airport. And, through Andy's genealogical research, our family came to know and love cousin David, his wife, Shona, and many other Scottish relatives.

Andy loved to travel, especially in a camper van or aboard a cruise ship. In their retirement years, he and Glenna visited many parts of the world and added dozens of friends to their (hard-bound) address book. He was a keen follower of Canadian politics—always with an eye to justice and equality—and if you look up “Loyal Habs Fans,” you’ll find Andy’s name. He rooted for his team in their golden era and never gave up on them when the Cup victories petered out (temporarily, of course).

That said, the biggest commitment of this man who took all his commitments very seriously was to his family, whom he loved deeply and steadfastly to the end.

A celebration of Andy's life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Downtown Eastside ministry of First United Church, whose work and values Andy embraced, or to a charity of your choice.

## Messages of Condolence

Jim,

We are so sorry for this tremendous loss.

Our thoughts are with you and your family at this very difficult time.

We will remember with fondness all the 'Action Andy' stories.

Love,

Deb, Rob & Brenna

— **Deb & Rob**

I remember most (and with gratitude) Andy's giggle, always warm, always a little bit mischievous and always pure. I can hear it.

I am thinking of you all and sending so much love at this really difficult time.

Leah xo

— **Leah**

Glenna and family,

We are so saddened to hear of Andy's passing. His warm smile and gentle nature will remain with us forever. Our years together at Cook School were the very best!! His enthusiasm and love for the French language not only influenced so many students but was paramount in my becoming an FSL teacher and embarking on so many French teaching and travel opportunities. Merci, mon ami!!

Our thoughts and prayers are with you all as you keep Andy's memory close to your hearts. The world has lost a "one of a kind" and our lives were blessed to have been a small part of Andy's journey on earth.

With much love and appreciation for sharing Andy with us,

Kathy & Brian Yamasaki

**— Kathy & Brian Yamasaki**

Glenna, Heather and Jim. What a shock!

Andy and my late husband John, were true friends and had a deep bond which had initially developed when Andy and John taught at Riverdale High School, Pierrefonds, Montreal. The two men had a similar crazy sense of humor, and seemed to relish each other's "joie de vivre".

When Glenna and I met we enjoyed going out as a foursome and many nights were spent at various restaurants / bistros and of course, dare I mention, " Bill Wong's" on Decarie Boulevard where Andy was treated like royalty! It seems like just yesterday.

We drifted apart when Andy and Glenna moved to B.C. and we to Alberta. But we kept in contact though not as much as I now wish.

Andy and Glenna were a fun couple and it was obvious that they cared deeply for one another, so Glenna, I can imagine how this tragic loss has rattled your world. You have my deepest sympathy and my thoughts will be with you for a long time. Be strong, my friend, memories are the cement that will help you at this time and they will creep into unexpected moments later on in your life and give you sad joy. Andy Burt was a real gentleman and I consider it a privilege to have known him!

Caroline

**— caroline hunter**

I am deeply shocked to hear of Andy's sudden passing. I heard that with tears.

My thoughts are with you.

Love,

Aiko

**— Aiko Uehara**

Dear Glenna, Heather and Jim. I was fortunate to have known Andy and I am saddened by his passing and sorry for your loss. What a great life Andy had. Reading his testimony it is evident that he was very kindhearted and strived to make the world a better place for all. I have fond memories of Andy, Glenna and I seeing the water evacuated at Bondi Beach due to a shark sighting and walking the Bondi to Bronte Coastal Path, viewing the sculptures along the way and having lunch at Bondi Icebergs whilst watching surfers catch the crashing waves. RIP. Onya mate!!

— **Dazza**

Dear Glenna and Family,

So shocked to hear about the passing of Andy. Have fond memories of the chats we used to have at Church about the guide dog puppies you used to sponsor and when we bumped into him at the grocery store. Always had time for a quick catch up. Our thoughts and prayers with you all at this difficult time. May he RIP.

Love John, Ellen, Brett, Jason and Sarah Gillespie xx

— **John and Ellen Gillespie**

Dearest Glenna, Heather and Jim (Dr. de).

Reading of Andy's passing in the Optimist was truly a shock. Please accept our most heartfelt condolences.

Andy and I both lived in Maisonneuve in Montreal east but met for the first time here in BC in the late 70's. We became instant friends and professional colleagues and enjoyed many years of friendship. His personality was always welcoming and positive. We shared many moments discussing politics and cheering for our cherished Canadiens de Montréal. I had the greatest pleasure of interacting with Andy's lovely wife and children over the years. He was always extremely proud of them. Andy will always have a special place in our hearts. Nous t'oublierons jamais cher ami, Andy. Our love to Glenna, Heather and Jim.

Nick Ardanaz and family

— **Nick Ardanaz and family**

Dear Glenna and Family. We were very saddened to hear of Andy's passing. We always enjoyed our chats with you both when meeting on the streets of Tsawwassen over the years. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family at this time.

— **Peter and Judy Rutherford,**

Glenna and family, I am saddened to hear of Andy's passing. Andy was a wonderful, kind, and gentle man with a great sense of humour and, dare I say, mischievousness. I know he will be missed, and always remembered fondly, by everyone who knew him. My thoughts and prayers are with you at this time. Hugs and hearts, Michele

— **Michele McLaurin**

My sympathies to you, Mr Burt was such a great person.

Mes sympathies je pense à vous,MFG

— **Marie france Gagnon**

Dear Glenna and family,

My wife Audrey and I are saddened to learn of Andy's passing.

As a child growing up in Beaconsfield, my parents had many wonderful friends that the kids were introduced to over the years. "Andy & Glenna" were two names that were very familiar to us as we grew into adulthood.

My Dad George taught with Andy in Montreal. My Mom Mavis and my Dad became very good friends with Andy and Glenna and always valued their friendship highly.

Unfortunately both of my parents have passed in the past few years.

We would like to offer you our deepest sympathies.

Dave Stacey.

— **Dave Stacey**



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/burt-andrew>

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