# Colin Thomas Buss

JUNE 29, 2025



Colin was a force of nature. From the moment he arrived he took his world by storm, pushing for what he believed was right, even when faced with the degenerative disease that finally killed him, and took his power away, bit by little bit, he never lost that will.

Colin struck everyone who knew him as a person with a friendly demeanour, great determination and energy. He was known as an adventurer who would climb the tallest trees and tackle the mountain peak and was always up to tackle a difficult project, even when no one else was: to organize a home, a business, pack a car or move a house. He studied and excelled at forestry, getting scholarships and taking part in research projects. He graduated from the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 1993 with a degree in forestry, and ended up taking his passion for forests to work in silviculture management out of Campbell River for TimberWest's Johnstone Strait operations. When he left that position in 2005, he started three businesses: Run-of-the-River a tourism project that offered tours of local flora and fauna to cruise ship passengers when the big cruises ships to Alaska included Campbell River as one of their ports of call. Seamore Power, a company from 2006 to 2011 that was working to set up wind farms to take advantage of the powerful winds on the island. His main company, was a forestry business that went by Sonora Forestry and CT Buss and Associates handling forestry projects.

In Campbell River he joined the local running community and got involved as a leader (and coined the name for) the local run club, River Runners. He also served on the board of the Vancouver Island Runner's Association (VIRA) including time in the role of president. He also took part in, organized and oversaw some local race events.

Colin lived with spinocerebellar ataxia type 1 (SCA1) a dominantly inherited neurodegenerative condition that his father, uncles, grandmother and several cousins also had. There is no treatment for a condition that usually begins some time after 30 years of age and progressively affects the ability to balance, speak and control all motor movements. There are multiple types of SCAs, and in 1993, the genetic marker for SCA1 was the first of this category of ataxia to be found (which is why it is named SCA1). Colin had the test for the gene in 1995 and learned then that he would develop the condition. He was clinically diagnosed ten years later.

Because he knew he would eventually experience this loss he made sure to fulfil a list of dreams including travelling, attending international golf championships, taking a masters course in paleoanthropology that took him to South Africa to see the earliest known human remains, running marathons including qualifying for and running the Boston Marathon, starting his own businesses. Even though it wasn't planned, he said that his biggest dream was fulfilled with the birth of his son, Joshua and he loved being Joshua's dad.

When he became symptomatic he continued to travel and pursue connections, developed his love of movies and collected many DVDs and movie recordings. He continued to use his skills as an organizer as a volunteer with the local Rotary club and joined Toastmasters and completed his "competent communicator" designation, delivering a year of prepared speeches. He continued to be as

physically active as he could, managing with a cane, then a walker and with reluctance, with a wheelchair, propelling himself when he still could.

At the end of 2019 he left his independent living and relocated to Discovery Harbour Care Home in Campbell River where he continued to take every opportunity to stay active, riding his exercise bike and doing regular strength classes. He would speak with his siblings by FaceTime every week, as long as the recreation staff were able to set it up for him. With the help of recreation aides he was able to complete an autobiography, documenting the highlights of his life as a legacy for his family and friends.

As it became more difficult for him to communicate and take care of his everyday needs, he still arranged for as much independence as possible, made the tough choices that would extend his time alive and battled to the very end.

Predeceased by his father, James Buss in 1985, his mother, Rosemary Buss in 2022 and his eldest brother Buck (James) Buss in 2023, he is survived by his son Joshua Kruger, his dear friend, supporter and mother of his child Nadine Kruger, his sisters Shawn Buss and Fiona Jackson, his brother David Buss and a wider circle of other loving family and friends. If you would like to do something in honour of Colin, they ask that you plant a tree in his memory.

Organizations that fund research into understanding of and treatment for ataxia are Ataxia Canada and the National Ataxia Foundation in the US.

## Messages of Condolence

May I offer my sincere condolences to Colin's family and friends.Cherish the memories to a man that lived life to the fullest.

**— Will Nelson**

Colin I was so upset to hear of your passing. If I had known I would have made every effort to come see you one last time, but I do not only have my memories but I have video, particularly if our shoot at Paradise Meadows where we filmed to promote the trail rider. Your courage and fortitude when faced with insermountable hardship was unmatched. Your ability to smile when you felt nothing but pain and dispair and your ability to give when you had precious little for yourself will live on in memory. Rest in peace my friend. I guess I'll be doing church near New year alone but know you will always be with me .

**— Catherine Temple**

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