Gordon Wilson Dams



SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

Gordon Wilson Dams - October 23, 1943 - September 12, 2023

Gordon passed away on September 12, 2023, at Melville House hospice, with his loving wife Penny at his side, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Gordon was born to Fred and May Dams in Calgary, Alberta. The Dams family came west in 1945 and settled in Aldergrove, BC. Gordon was one of six kids.

Independent minded from an early age, he described himself in an elementary school essay assignment: “I love apple pie and I hate being bossed.” He was a born entrepreneur and businessman. His passion for the automotive business started at a young age. By the time he was old enough to get his driver’s license, he had already fixed up and sold his first vehicle.

Gordon and his high-school sweetheart, Mary Marmol, got married in 1962, unbeknownst to any of their parents, while still in school. Gordon & Mary started their family young. Son Gordie was their first born, followed by son James, and then daughter Loriann. Gordon instilled in his children from a young age the value of hard work and the importance of honesty and integrity, demonstrating it all by steadfast example.

Gordon enrolled in auto mechanics at Vancouver Vocational College, working nights and weekends at Burrard Esso. After 6 months, he took his exams, and then commenced his mechanical apprenticeship at Preston GM (then Steele Nicholson),

obtaining his Red Seal Certificate in 1966. He had been promoted to service manager at Preston's by this time, but he was restless to be his own boss.

In 1967, he built a new service station, to Shell Oil standards, on the property which he had acquired some years earlier, and on which he and Mary and his growing family also lived. His father's old Shell station business was moved into the new facility and he and his father were partners in the business until he bought his father out in 1970. Gordon then expanded the automotive service and added RV sales.

He always dreamed of owning a new car franchise. Although his preference was GM as that was where he got his start, the only new car franchise available in the lower mainland was a Lincoln-Mercury 'open point' in North Surrey. And so it was that in 1974, he and Mary were the proud owners of Dams Lincoln-Mercury, having converted the old Fernwood Acres Banquet Hall on 104th Avenue into an auto dealership. He was at the time the youngest Ford of Canada dealer principal, at the age of 30.

Gordon and his sons ran the dealership business for 48 years, adding a second store near Langley in 1994. What set Dams Ford Lincoln apart from others was its strong parts and service business, as well as commercial vehicle sales. Gordon's focus was always building lasting relationships with customers.

Gordon took a keen interest in all the people around him, his employees, his customers, his suppliers, and fellow businesspeople. He was very proud to have long-standing, multigenerational customers, and suppliers, with relationships spanning many decades. Many employees spent the majority of their careers at Dams, and many family members of employees also joined the company. It truly was a family business.

In 1985, Gordon met the love of his life, Penny. They married in 1987, and Penny joined the ‘family business’. They worked together, sharing an office, and were inseparable – if you saw one, the other wasn’t far away. They enjoyed a beautiful 36-year partnership and marriage. Gordon and Penny shared many passions and loved traveling together, covering much of the west coast and beyond in both their boat and their RV, as well as enjoying many (Ford of Canada dealer) trips farther afield to exotic destinations.

Gordon will be fondly remembered as a loving husband, father, grandfather, friend and mentor to many, and someone who had knowledge, wisdom, and countless stories to share.

Gordon’s impact on the community was immense, and his loss will be felt by many who had the pleasure and privilege of knowing him. He leaves behind a lasting legacy of integrity, honesty, and entrepreneurship.

Gordon was predeceased by his parents, Fred and May, and his brother David. He is survived by his ex-wife, Mary, his wife Penny Stibbs, his children Gordie (Lori), James (Launna), and Loriann (John), his grandchildren Rebecca, Halee, Sydney, Tori, and Charlee, his great grandchildren Taylor, Maddison, and Russell, and his sisters Marlene, Doris, Donna, and Elaine.

In lieu of flowers or arrangements the Dams family would appreciate memorial donations to the Peace Arch Hospice Society in Gordon’s name. Donate Online - Peace Arch Hospice Society

There will be a Celebration of Life, location and date TBD

Messages of Condolence

My life experience of knowing Gordon started in knowing his father Fred.
I became a branch manager in 1972 and had the pleasure of assisting Gordon in his starting of his Ford Lincoln dealership. His drive was excellent and seeing his growth was a great experience.
I will miss Gordon as a friend and as a business man . He will be deeply missed by his family and many many associates and friends.

— Raymond Collishaw

Our condolences to Penny and the entire Dams Family. Our hearts ache for you. And to my mentor Gordon….rest in peace, my friend, rest in peace

— Marlene and John Schroeder

My deepest sympathy to all the family. Over the last 52 years Gordon has greatly influenced my life and I will be eternally grateful.

— Bonnie keyworth

Our sincere condolences to Gordon’s family .We met Gord and Penny through Ian and Catherine McFarlane who were also Lincoln/ Mercury dealers and spent time with Gord and Penny at McFarlane's wedding in California.When Gord found out in casual conversation we liked golf , he shortly afterwards sent us a large case of golf balls he had found while walking around various golf courses. He had sorted the box to only include Titliest [my brand] in top condition……a kindness we will always remember …it’s always the little things that really count!…R.I P. Gord
Best wishes to the whole Dams family

— Ken Hallat

My deepest condolences to Penny and the Dams Family.
I will be forever eternally grateful for Gordon giving me my start as a Service Manager.
He was a true mentor for me and I will forever miss our "fireside chats".
"Rest in peace Gordon, you will always hold a special place in my heart"

— Judy Jobse

Gordon was a good and honourable competitor in the Ford business from the late 1970's when I first got to know him. Later in the 1990's Gord and Penny have become great friends, and Catherine and I have travelled with them to many lovely places. Gordon has lived a full and productive life, and he and Penny have accomplished so many things. They have both helped so many other people have a good life through their own success.
We will miss your smiling face Gordon!

— Ian & Catherine McFarlane

Gordon and my Father were very good friends from childhood. Our families spent many vacations together and we shared many special life moments over the years. We still refer to all of the Dams as part of our family. We are grateful to Gordon for bringing our families together and for raising great kids who we consider to be amongst our best of friends. Gordon had a smile and laugh that would light up a room. I hope my Dad and Gordon are finally able to share some more laughs in Heaven. On behalf of Kyle and Karen we all send our love.

— Kevin Schmahl

I'm sorry to hear about the passing of Gordon Dams. He had a positive impact on many people's lives and was a kind and engaging man. My thoughts are with the entire family during this time of sorrow. It's clear that his presence will be greatly missed, but the memories of his kindness and the connections he made with others will continue to shine as a testament to the extraordinary person he was.

— Louise McKnight

Our deepest sympathies to Penny and the whole family. Gordon and Dams were a large part of our lives since 1980 and was very supportive of family. Always a great man we respect and honour.

— Peter and Zanie

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Printed on November 2, 2026