David Wightman



NOVEMBER 12, 2025

August 21, 1941 – November 12, 2025

David Wightman, a man whose life was marked by courage, integrity, humour, and a passion for education, died on November 12, 2025. He left behind a legacy that will be remembered by his family, friends, and the countless lives he touched through his teaching and his love of sports and the tennis community.

Born to James Clarke Wightman and Margaret (née Durham) “Joey” Wightman at St. Paul’s Hospital, David was predeceased by his parents and his first wife, Sally Walker.

He is survived by his loving wife, Michelle St. Louis. Together, they built a home where family gatherings with David’s children, Adam (Marina) and Tiffany, and Michelle’s children, Angèle (Neil) and Stephen (Michelle) Yanor, became endearing traditions. Whether cheering for horses at Hastings Park, organizing treasure hunts, or finding golf balls on the ninth hole at U.B.C., grandchildren Bianca, Sam, Piper, Tate, Kaiden, and Atlas were bright lights in his life.

David’s early life was marked by a significant challenge when he contracted polio at the age of seven. However, this adversity only strengthened his resolve. He learned to adapt, becoming a left-handed tennis player despite the physical limitations imposed by his condition. After completing his degree at the University

of BC, David worked as the head tennis professional at the Glencoe Club in Calgary and later, Hollyburn Country Club in West Vancouver. He also toured Europe with highly ranked Tennis Canada juniors.

David’s love for sports extended beyond tennis. He was also a competitive squash player, bringing the same intensity to the squash court as he did the tennis court. For 35 years, David dedicated himself to teaching, first at the elementary level at University Hill, and later history and social studies at Prince of Wales Secondary. He inspired generations of students with his engaging teaching style, his famous debates, and the memorable phrase, “Let’s ask the judge.” His impact on students went beyond the classroom, as many former students were inspired to pursue careers in teaching or politics.

David’s marriage to Michelle St. Louis was a tapestry of love, adventure, and travel. They loved to visit Palm Desert and the Napa Valley, and hit the links in Ireland and Scotland.

In addition to his many pursuits, David was a talented writer, capturing the essence of his childhood in Vancouver’s West End through humorous and tender short stories.

At Jericho Tennis Club, where he had been a member since 1976, David was revered for his sportsmanship, his camaraderie, and his willingness to offer generous line calls to his opponents. The game of golf brought him joy, playing with his wife and friends at the Richmond Golf and Country Club and in the UBC men’s midweek golf league.

His absence is deeply felt, but his legacy continues to inspire and warm the hearts of his family and many friends.

The family is grateful for the compassionate care provided by the staff on the third floor at Holy Family Hospital during David’s final weeks. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you consider doing a good deed for someone in need. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

Messages of Condolence

Sincere condolences to family and all who knew and loved Dave. A beautiful tribute to a very special man.

— Cathy Went

I count myself fortunate to be among the many students—and tennis players—whose lives were touched by Dave. The warmth of his personality, his kindness, the quality of his character, and the example he set made him stand out above the rest. Even after fifty years, I still remember the lessons he taught and the learning he inspired. Most of all, I remember how he made kids feel seen, respected, and capable.

— W. Sauder

I was fortunate to have Mr. Wightman for Social Studies and History in high school. I remember the debates well and I try to emulate his style in my own teaching at a university. He will always be remembered.

— Tracy Sherlock

I was at PW from 1978-1983. Mr. Wightman was my teacher and coach. He was a great guy, always smiling and encouraging. I am so sorry for your loss.

— Barb Cherniwchan (Dowding)

Dave and I had many an enjoyable (and competitive) game of tennis in our younger days. I'm very saddened to learn of his recent passing.

— George Morfitt

He was my teacher at PW! He had a way with seeing potential and making me feel like he believed in me

— Jordan Griggs

I attended PW at the same time as Tiffany and Adam. I am so sorry for your loss. Your dad made an indelible impact on me. I still remember the moment in social studies when I realized he was teaching history as a means to grapple with pressing ethical questions that were relevant to the *present.* A lightbulb went on for me that eventually led me to earn a PhD in History and to teach at SFU and UBC. I am so grateful to have had Mr. Wightman as my teacher.

— Paige Raibmon

Dave was my first tennis coach. I have nothing but fond memories of Dave, his dog Sam and his old VW Bug convertible in which he occasionally drove us to tournaments (with the passenger door tied fast with a rope. I have a cherished photo of Dave, Sam and myself circa1970 which I would be happy to share.

— Kim Moller

The news has just travelled to Prince of Wales Secondary School where Dave was a teacher. I was lucky enough to learn so many things about being a master teacher from him. He was famous for having his students do a "debate". He did a workshop on it for other teachers and we sat there soaking in all the wisdom he had to impart. A sat in the staffroom room for many hours with him as we used to write comments by hand on report cards. He wrote on every student's report card and every student got an honest and articulate evaluation of their progress. I still think about what I learned every time I start writing my report cards. Dave was also my department head when I applied for a special teacher's institute and I keep his kind and encouraging words that he wrote on my behalf. So many students benefitted from having him as a teacher! I know life will never be the same for anyone who knew him, especially Michelle. The entire family is in my thoughts at this sad time. I hope I can attend his celebration of life.

— Jacqueline Moon

Dave became a dear friend of my dad John Wiebe in the late 70's through tennis and they played many doubles tournaments together in the Okanagan. Dave brought his family every summer and wow the fun we all had! He was an amazing man and dear father to his children. When him and dad weren't on the court competing he would take us out on our clay court for lessons and ice cream after the lesson. Our family adored and loved you Dave. So sad to hear of your passing. Dad passed away November 12th as well; 7 years earlier. We're thinking of you and sending love to your family xxx

— ramona wiebe

I send my thoughts and prayers to Mr Whightman's family. I had Mr Whitghtman as a teacher in 1975 University Hill Elementary School. He was a very kind man with a lot of patience. He gave me so much encouragement to carry on to which I am so grateful. I will continue to think of his kindness .

— Roderick Begg

