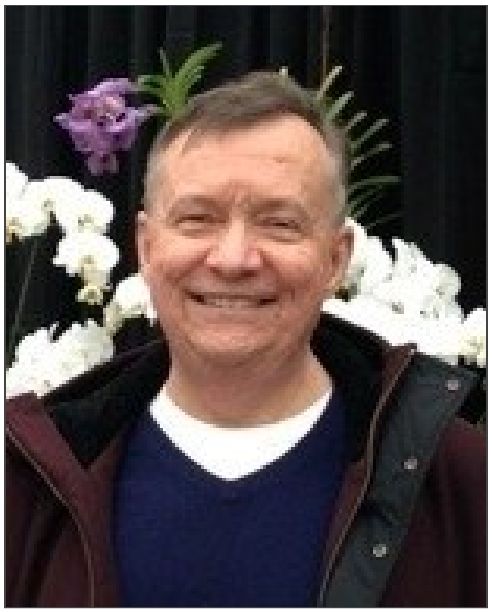
Gary Allen Gahr



NOVEMBER 1, 2017

Gary passed away peacefully at the age of 65 with his spouse Robert (Bob) Knall at his side at Vancouver General Hospital.

He was diagnosed in 2013 with an aggressive incurable form of Multiple Myeloma. Through a long and difficult struggle, Gary's optimism, determination and focus on the good in life amazed, inspired and kept us going. He underwent a stem cell transplant and subsequent treatment with a series of chemotherapy drugs, and participated in clinical trials in Vancouver (VGH) and Edmonton (Cross Cancer Institute). After exhausting all possible treatments, the cancer took Gary on November 1, 2017. We are filled with sadness at his loss, relief that the trials and tribulations of dealing with a terminal illness have ended, and gratitude for memories of a productive and loving life.

Gary is greatly missed by Robert (the love of his life and partner of 36 years), his brother Lee (Patricia) and nieces Lydia and Janika of Amsterdam, and a large circle of family, friends and colleagues around the world. He was predeceased by parents Wally and Helen, great aunt (Emma) Jo Snell of Torrance, CA and numerous aunts and uncles.

Gary was born in 1951 in Edmonton to Wally and Helen Gahr, and was raised on the family farm in the Bretona area of Strathcona County (now part of southeast Edmonton) for most of his youth. The family moved to Calgary for several years in the mid 1960's, before returning to Edmonton where Gary attended Colchester

elementary and Salisbury Composite schools. He obtained a Master of Arts degree in Geography from the University of Alberta in 1979, and then commenced his career in planning with the Alberta Ministry of Municipal Affairs, where he met Robert. In 1982 Gary took a position with the City of St. Albert as a Development Officer.

In 1989, he relocated to the Vancouver area with Robert, and was hired as a planner in the busy Planning and Development Department at the City of Surrey, where he worked until retiring in 2017. Gary was proud of his role in shaping the city, especially his involvement in significant, iconic projects such as Central City tower, the new main library, the new City Hall, RCMP E Division headquarters, and Surrey Memorial Hospital's major expansion. He loved his job and co-workers, and enjoyed the challenges and opportunities Surrey offered.

Gary will be remembered for his smile, sense of style and humour, and love of food and culture. He was logical, intelligent, a loyal friend, husband, son, brother, uncle and mentor, a generous soul always there for those in need. He travelled extensively with Robert and managed to visit every continent with the exception of Antarctica.

Gary was a lover of all things French, including language, food and culture. A pivotal experience in his life was a trip to Expo 67 in Montreal where he and his family stayed with the Lachapelle family of Longueuil and formed a lifelong friendship. Gary continued to develop his French language skills and cultural appreciation through a summer immersion program at Laval University in Quebec City, travel to Quebec and France, and continuing study through French literature, radio and television.

He was happiest when he was with friends and family, and particularly loved to be in the kitchen cooking amazing meals and creating dishes and an incredible mess for Bob to clean up.

The loss of Gary leaves a huge void in our lives. We must embrace our memories of all that Gary did to improve our world and to bring joy, happiness and love to the people in his life.

Thanks are extended to the staff at Vancouver General Hospital and BC Cancer Centre (in particular Drs. Sreenivasan and Song) and the Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton (especially Dr. Chris Venner) for their compassion and dedication in caring for Gary, and to all our friends and relatives for their help during this challenging time.

Cremation has taken place and Gary will be remembered at a celebration at a later date. Friends may contact the family for details.

Donations to Myeloma Canada (online at www.Myeloma.ca) or to the charity of your choice would be appreciated.

You are invited to leave a personal message of condolence.

Messages of Condolence

Gary was an amazing person, with a sense of humor. He was extremely generous, kind, funny human being. He will be missed by everyone Gary knew. He was one of a kind.

— Mary Knall

Gary, our dear cousin, is so missed by us all. Although we spent most of our lives in different countries and on different sides of the continent, our affections never waned. Bless Gary and Bob (and cousin Audrey from Edmonton) for choosing one last trip to the Pennsylvania to share time with us. He was an extraordinary soul, so giving. He exuded a quiet happiness and charm that cannot be replaced. I hear his voice and his laughter often when I remember him. All our love to you, Bob, and you journey on without your partner beside you. His spirit still holds your heart with his. God bless.

— JIll Bruckart

Glen and I met Gary and Bob while on a cruise to the South Pacific(2014). Bob was quite quiet but Gary was chatty and very funny. We exchanged emails never thinking that we would remain in contact. But we did! Newsy letters came and went; we enjoyed hearing from them as they travelled the world and learned new things(Gary did most of the emailing). Gary was an honest, loving and kind person with a great sense of humour. We miss hearing from him; the stories were wonderful!! May he rest in peace!

— Mary Ann Martin and Glen Newton

We still find it hard to believe that Gary is not with us any more, though he remains with us in the warm memories we have. We remember him so often with much love, and our abiding memory will be his beaming smile at the end of an exciting day quad biking here in Cyprus. We were amazed at his powers of endurance and his determination, both of which should serve to inspire others in time of great difficulty. Gary was a very special person and will be sorely missed. Our deepest condolences go out to Bob and his family.

— Vanessa and Tony Williams

We had the pleasure of working with Gary designing his dream kitchen.

His sense of humour and wit and great laughter endeared him to us.

His love and connection to Bob was an inspiration that we admired. He always spoke fondly of he’s beautiful nieces that he adored.

We will always remember him with a smile on Hearts

Bob can’t begin to imagine how life altering it is to lose your soul mate
But know he is forever with you and all those that met him.

— Mickael & Cary

We met Gary and Bob on a cruise around Australia and New Zealand in 2015.
We're so glad that we did.
Even though we only knew Gary a too short time, we're glad that he came into our lives. We enjoyed his wonderful sense of humor, his beautiful smile and his good cheer.
We send our deepest condolences to Gary's friends and family, especially to Bob.

— Joseph Small + Nicolas Boyon

Always lovely memories of sharing adventures together with Bob and Gary. Gary will be missed, and we feel privileged to have shared such heart warming memories together during his life as we traveled to beautiful places.

— Dave Moake & Bruce McKelvy

I am so sorry for your loss, Bob. I have very fond memories of the times I met Gary in Edmonton and Vancouver over the years, and Gary's kind smile, the twinkle in his eyes, and sense of humour and intelligence.
I remember one time many years ago that I went to a perogy dinner in Vancouver with a dear friend whose opinion I value very highly. We ran into you and Gary there and were surprised to learn we both knew you. "No way, that's MY Gary," I think she joked (she had briefly worked in the same Surrey office, I believe). I was delighted to learn that she thought very highly of him, and the esteem I held for him rose even more!
His way in the world, and the love and travelling life you shared, has inspired me over the years. Peace and strength to you and Gary's family and friends.

— Deanna McLeod

We met Gary and Bob on our cruise to Hawaii in 2013. We enjoyed our time with chatty Gary and Bob just looked on. Our deepest condolences to you Bob and keep happy thoughts of your times with Gary.

— Noreen and Dennis Baker

Bob, we were so sad to hear of Gary's passing. I think the best way to explain my feelings about Gary are that when I was speaking with him I was always happy, happy to be in his presence, happy to be experience the great person he was. I will miss having those moments. You are in our thoughts daily Bob.

— Cameron McLean

Gary had a permanent smile - even when he was frowning (how DID he do that). He was sharp as tack. He laughed at his own jokes. He didn't let me get away with anything - listening patiently to my monologue and then zinging it in such a gentle way. I loved how he kept you on your toes. I always liked meeting with you both. You were such a compliment to each other. We are so sorry for your loss Bob.

— Robert Sharman

A few words about Gary is hardly fair... it's as if there are no words good enough. So many stories & thoughts. I met Gary through work at the City of Surrey. And then to my good fortune I met Robert at the Township... now that's good Karma. Gary shared a sincere, irreverent and joyful character that lived within him AND outside for the world to see... He would often bring a Cheshire cat smile to share thoughts over a unique situation or a simple perspective of some irony in life or our work... I looked forward to that. (He planned I engineered)...there was always time to share a freshly made smile...Thank you Gary. I will never forget his "Suit of Light" that he just had to show me in the office, like a Matador on a catwalk! I get a huge smile just sharing that memory and maybe you can see it too. Gary is one of those individuals I wish I had met sooner and had more time to know... between the my own family routines, distractions and duties of life. Gary just naturally gave his kind character and shared many smiles that will always exist...as a friend should leave you. I am so fortunate to know Gary... We were rich with his presence.

— Francesco (Checo) Clarotto

I met Bob 40 years ago at university, and can testify that I witnessed Bob and Gary on their first "date", I believe in 1981. Gary was a singular soul who will never be forgotten by those who crossed paths with him. Fierce, funny, bright, romantic, practical... the list goes on and on. Every moment spent with Gary was memorable, although I have to say his culinary skills, and his attraction to Bill's Harley Davison, stand out in this moment. What a guy! Bill and I hold both Bob and Gary in our hearts. I enjoy imagining Gary flying free and easy, and eating as much as his heart desires while speaking French to anyone nearby. Bob, we wish you strength and grace.

— Carole Ames & Bill Leuze

The opportune to meet you was unfortunately to short but we want to tell you how mutch we appreciate your friendly.

— Roger PANGAUD & Patrick TEISSIER

My sincerest condolences, Bob. It's a big loss.
I always enjoyed chatting with Gary when we'd run into each other at the gym.

— Stanley Ulmer

Although I never got to know Gary well, it was very clear to me that the relationship you had with him was something special. As well, he was most generous in offering practical advice and support, through me, to my brother and his partner after my brother was diagnosed with MM. Thank you, Gary, I won't forget your kindness.

— Chris Bates

I am so sorry for your loss Bob.I will always remember Gary as a smiling fighter who never gave up.

He was always cheerful even in the middle of difficult exercise he wanted to push through. I will dearly miss his smiling face, his laugh and just presence of energy and excitement he carried.

I’m very thankful that I could meet him and spend time with him during our regular sessions and know a bit more about him and you.

Stay strong Bob, my heart is with you.

— Martin Voslar

Gary was awesome! I was lucky enough to work with him for a decade. During that time he was the most positive (even during sickness) and humorous person in the office.

I still think about him on a regular basis and miss his laugh most of all.

— John Koch-Schulte

These are lovely tributes and I am sure you will be encouraged by them, Bob. Your tribute is the sweetest of all; we especially take note of your words, "We must embrace our memories of all that Gary did to improve our world and to bring joy, happiness and love to the people in his life."

Health care professionals with whom I have been in contact recently have emphasised the importance of the very determination you speak of, to make, and treasure memories, rejoice in the simple, happy times that we have with our most dearly loved ones, and, possibly, trust God with our heartache. Jack, who is sitting beside me as I write, and I, both thank you for such determination and stand with you in the weeks, and months to come. xoxoxo

— Debbie McLeod Knall

Gary was a wonderfully warm and kind man and we are greatly saddened by his passing. Our condolences to Bob and Gary's wider family. Gary showed true mettle on his diagnosis and set about informing himself about the illness and all possible avenues of treatment. He generously shared this knowledge and experience with others, always tempered by his wonderful sense of humour! Wherever Gary is on this next part of his journey we know he is perfecting his gougere technique as he promised. Knowing Gary has been such a privilege.

— Jan & Ron Gibson

I grew up with Lee and during our teenager years Gary was just the big brother who we really didn’t associate with due to Lee’s friends being annoying brats. Over the years (albeit it took a long time) a friendship formed during my visits from Australia which went from stopping in to say hi / and occasionally sleeping on their couch to having Gary and Bob stay with my wife and I when they visited Australia in 2015. That friendship grew closer towards the last few years and I quite cherish the friendship that was formed with Gary and Bob. Over these past few years I got to know Gary and what makes Gary so special is his spirit of generosity and his love of family and friends. Gary was the ultimate fighter and never gave up and even during the toughest time he made time to catch up when my family visited in July 2017. While Gary is no longer around in physical form his spirit will remain with is for many a year and he will be greatly missed by everyone who has met him.

— Mike Colwell

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https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/gahr-gary-allen

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