Paul David Higgins

NOVEMBER 12, 2019

Obituary for the love of my life

Paul David Higgins, 52, of Abbotsford, BC passed away unexpectedly on November 12, 2019. Born in Manchester, UK, to Jim and Pat Higgins in 1967, Paul enjoyed growing up with his younger brother Peter surrounded by an extended family. When his father was posted to Germany with the British Army, the family moved together and spent several happy years on the army base there.

Paul loved to cycle, run, and swim as a kid, and he continued these passions throughout his life, later completing two triathlons. After his family retuned to Manchester when Paul was a teenager, he developed an eclectic taste in music, and his love of Queen and Van Halen shaped the killer guitar licks he would later perfect. He also spent many hours cycling to and from Manchester airport to watch the planes land and take off.

After leaving school at 16 (as was usual in England at the time), Paul briefly worked as a trainee quantity surveyor, but returned to sixth-form college the following year. He met Mary there and so started a romance that would last the rest of his life.

Paul lived life large in his youth and enjoyed many escapades in his later teens, joining his first band at college. He was a skilled bassist and lead guitarist who threw himself into his performances. After completing his schooling, he went on to start training as a nurse at the Manchester Royal Infirmary. He enjoyed the camaraderie and challenge of his new career, and successfully graduated from the three-year training in 1992 as a Registered Nurse.

He also married Mary that year in Manchester, and they moved to Gateshead where he worked in the Accident and Emergency (A&E) department. There he formed his second band with Mary, brother-in law Martin and friend Miles. After the birth of their first child, Sam, in 1994, they moved back to Manchester where he worked as an A&E nurse and continued to play in the band. They undertook an indie tour of select venues across England and released an EP and an LP. Juggling rock god status with work and parenthood, Paul and Mary's family grew with Edward in 1996 and Everett in 1998.

His love of technology led him to take a degree while he worked part time, and he successfully graduated from Manchester Metropolitan University with a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Multimedia Technology in 2003. By then he had realised that working in an office all day long was not his true calling, and he returned to nursing full time.

Rebecca was born in 2003 to complete their family. Paul always took a very hands-on approach to fatherhood, changing diapers, singing lullabies, and roaming the countryside with the kids on adventures. He spent many happy hours playing trains, babas, Legos, and Power Rangers, and the family hosted many family parties at their home in Hollingworth.

Paul loved to travel and try new things, so when he happened upon a job fair in Manchester he connected with Fraser Health and the family soon started planning a new life in Canada. They arrived in Vancouver in August 2007 and Paul started work at the Abbotsford MSA hospital on the surgical wards. It wasn't long before he was recruited into the new Palliative Program and he found his new vocation as a Nurse Clinician. Paul was rightfully proud of the work he did in the Palliative Program, and over the past 12 years he worked with hundreds of families and individuals as they navigated the difficult final stages of life.

Paul and his family fully embraced Canadian life and became Canadian citizens in 2015. He was very proud of all his children's achievements, and often spoke of them to his colleagues and friends. He was also very supportive of Mary's career. He joined her in writing, producing, directing, and editing creative works and celebrated when she started a new teaching career at UFV. He loved hosting family and friends who visited, and enjoyed walking with his family and dogs, shooting at the range, and chilling with his guitar and a beer. Paul never took living in one of the most beautiful places in the world for granted, and looked forward to many new adventures.

Paul's family and friends loved his humour, perspective, and zest for life. His empathy, professionalism, and expertise were greatly valued by his colleagues. Everyone he met benefitted from his kindness, sense of humour, and love of a good cup of tea. His death has prompted an outpouring of love and support from the community, and his family are deeply grateful for the many messages of condolence they have received. His sudden loss is difficult to comprehend, but his love lives forever.

You are invited to his Celebration of Life at the Quality Hotel and Conference Centre, Abbotsford, at 3pm to 6pm on Monday, November 25. Please direct donations in lieu of flowers to BC Children's Hospital, BC Cancer Foundation or Abbotsford Hospice Society.

You are welcome to leave a personal message of condolence for the family.

Messages of Condolence

Oh Mary such sad news. I remember those days at Xavs, chilling in the portacabins. Much love and hugs to you and your family. You guys were always meant to be together. Will always remember Higgs as the big quiet one. You are so lucky to have had each other , the pain will ease in time but the memories will always live on □ □

— Maria Taylor nee Hilliard

Paul was an amazing nurse and even better team mate. His legacy lives on. My friends, who never met him, know him well by all of the funny Paul stories. Thank you Paul for being the best. I will always have you with me in my nursing career.

— Lynn Curry

There are not words that can fully articulate my condolences to the Higgins family. May he rest in peace. Thoughts and prayers are with you .

— Sukaina Kara

Very sad to hear the news about our friend Higgs. We trained as nurses together in Manchester in 1988 and Higgs lived next door to me in the nurses home. He was a gentle kind and funny guy and he was a popular member of our training intake and around the hospital. Myself and wife Julie stayed with Higgs and Mary at their house in Newcastle and I remember having a few beers and laughs with Higgs. Condolences to Mary and the family - he was a lovely guy.

— Wayne Robson

Dear Mary, I am totally devastated to hear such sad news today. Sending you all my thoughts, prayers and so much love. So, so sad. I do, and will continue to, cherish all the wonderful memories of such a fantastic guy in Higgs. Rest In Peace xx. Love Loobie xx

— Louise Hennessy (née Hall)

Fond memories of a great guy. I didn’t know him for long but the times we had at MRI will never be forgotten.

— Neil Fury

I am so sorry to hear of Higg's passing. I'm devastated. Words cannot express how terrible this loss was. I know Higg's did his best to live life to the full and was the best of family men. I never ever expected this.

All my love to your wonderful family.

Paschal
xxxxx

— Paschal Kelly

G’night Higgs, the blu-tac liberation army lives on. x

— Andy Tong

I'm so sorry for your loss. I didn't know Paul for very long. I met him when he was a student nurse at Manchester Royal Infirmary with my brother Sean , and friends ,Anil , Wayne, Danny and others. He was always having fun and loved music and beer. For some reason Paul and the rest of his gang inspired me to become a nurse. And David and Brian 2 others also
following our adventure in healthcare. Ironically I have specialised in nursing older adults with dementia, and work in palliative care too. It's very rewarding and I sure he was brilliant. He always struck me as a kind and gentle man. I'll raise a glass to him later and perhaps play some 90's rock!
To quote Queen "Only the good die young" R.I.P.

— Maurice Egan

Higg's was a very close friend throughout our school years and beyond. So many memories of the antics and fun we all had. He will be very sadly missed and I would like to pass on my heartfelt condolences to Mary, his family and the kids. I hope they have a Horse & Farrier and a trusty Bass guitar whether you go.

— Barry Fowler

My deepest heartfelt condolences to Mary, all the kids and rest of your family. Higgs was a top lad and the memories of all the stupid things we got upto and great times we had will stay with me always. Xxx

— Ed Byrne

Old school friend from plessington days
Sad to hear of his death
Rest in peace
And mind how you go
Love and hugs to your family and friends
Especially to Mary x

— Steven lyden

I trained with Paul as a nurse in the late 80's, I am absolutely devasted at this news. A genuinely lovely man, our mutual love of music brought us together, and I have many happy memories of our youth.
A fine gentleman, RIP my old friend.

— Sean Egan

My thoughts, prayers and love to you Mary and your children on the sad loss of Paul your husband and father of your children.
God Bless
Uncle Terry

— Uncle Terry

Hi Mary
I’m so sorry to hear about Paul . Please accept my heart felt condolences .
I trained with Paul in Manchester and will always remember him as a gentleman with a kind heart .
Thinking of you during this difficult time.
Caroline (Robinson)

— Caroline

Mary,
I'm heartbroken at the sudden loss of Paul your husband and father to Sam,Edward, Forest and Rebecca. I have such fond memories of Paul playing with his cousins as a very young boy. He was one of the nicest men I have the pleasure of knowing and watched growing up.
Auntie Rita.
God bless Paul,fly with angels R.I.P

— Rita

So sorry our families didn't get to meet in recent years. You'll be sadly missed.

RIP Higgs

— Luke Martin

My heart goes out to Paul's family. I was blessed with the ability to work with Paul and held him in such high regard. He was never too busy for a question no matter how silly. He was always calm and helpful with a little bit of comedy wit mixed in. He should have never been taken so soon, he always made the lives of those around him better. I can only try and carry forward his compassion in my own practice and life and have an increased awareness of how special every day is. My condolences.

— Natalie Woodman

Out thoughts are with you and your family Mary, many happy memories of growing up with my cousin Paul. He will be sadly missed, God Bless Paul RIP
Gary, Joanne & family xxx

— Gary Whelan

I met Paul, or Higgs as we all knew him aged 12 and quickly got infected by his humour and love of life. This carried on all the way through secondary college and College. A more funny, talented and kinder man you couldn’t meet. He’ll be sadly missed by all those who were lucky enough to know him. Thinking of Mary and his family and friends at this very sad time. Love to you all. I’ll be raising a beer and cranking up Queen and Van Halen tonight. Rest in peace my ol’ mate Higgs, love ya.

— Kev Glynn

Mary and children, we are so sorry for the sudden loss of Paul we are heartbroken

— Aunty Babs and uncle Peter

Dear Mary and family, this is truly such shocking news... Higgs was so young at only 52, what an absolute tragedy. I was in the same group with Paul and 15 others at MRI March 1988 intake (many of whom have commented on here). We were an experimental group of all 'none school leavers' 5 of those being men! We all turned heads and forged the way for future intakes and more men came into nursing...Sean's brother (Maurice) who I have just read is one of them encouraged to join up! What lovely memories I have of that time in Manchester and the friendships made and Higgs was one of the nicest people I met during my years there. He was so kind and personable and liked by everyone who met him. He tried to teach me how to play guitar but I failed miserably, we shared a love of music and he made me feel less home sick, I was the youngest in the group at only 17. It's made me smile reading all about what he and yourself (plus kiddies) have been upto over the last 30 years and i'm so pleased to see that he lived his life to the absolute fullest. Bless you all, my thoughts are with you at the very sad time Savannah (the baby) xxxxx

— Savannah Hull (nee Jurin)

Paul my eldest son I'm heartbroken at your passing..I can only say the love you shared with Mary is second to none and thank you for 4 fantastic grandchildren..you are now with your dad my love always mum.

— Pat Higgins

We met Paul in the hardest time of our life 3 years ago when my mum of 54 was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer. The gentleness and compassion Paul had walking through everything with my dad and I was impeccable. We are forever thankful for his support and aid at such a tough time. We are so sorry for your loss.

— Stephanie atwell

Shocked and saddened to hear the news of the passing of Higgs. I have many fond memories of him and the boys when training at MRI.

— Mike Picthall

Dear Mary ...
I am so sorry for your loss...my deepest condolences to you and the children.
Peter is absolutely besides himself with grief...Paul will be missed so much...
We love you all...You are in our thoughts at this sad time.
Sending you Love and Prayers from our Family to yours

— Catherine Higgins

Mary our heartfelt condolences to you and the children wasn't around you all much because of marrying an American and moving to the states in 1969 but please know I always thought of my nephew Paul and family often up there in Canada and was never more shocked to hear of Paul's passing All our love to the family Aunty Bridget and Uncle Jerry

— Bridget Askren

Sending heartfelt condolences to Mary and family. Rest in peace Paul

— Beverley Hulme

I missed so much growing up away from the family in the USA. Know you are never far from my thoughts. Sending you much love and prayers cousin and family!

— Laura Dalman

Our prayers & thoughts for all the family. Feeling your loss. Rest in peace buddy. Auntie Patrice, Uncle Edward, Claire, Nathan & Amelia.

— Patrice & Edward Smith

So sorry for your loss, Mary. Paul was my cousin, and can remember him coming to stay with my family.
I too am a nurse and well aware of the hard work and dedication it takes. Thinking of you all xxx

— Julia

Absolutely devastated to have such a kind man leave us so soon. It still doesn't feel real. My deepest condolescences to Mary and all of her incredible children, who've been nothing but a source of warmth and support to me. There are no words to describe the impact Paul made.
May he rest in peace.

— Amanda Frost

My thoughts are with Mary and the children. Paul was taken to early and will truly be missed, but his memory will live on in those that knew and loved him. Rest well brother.

— peter higgins

Sending my love to mary, his kids, his mum and brother, still in shock with the sudden loss of my cousin, r.i.p paul, love julie, john and family xxx

— Julie goodlaf

So so sorry mary to hear about Paul,
I am his Auntie susan xxx

— Susan waldrip

Dear Mary

We were so shocked to hear about Pauls passing our thoughts and prayers go out to you and the children he was such a lovely guy all our love

Alison and Val (godfather)

xxxx

— Alison VALINDER

So sad at the passing of my Cousin Paul, sending all my love to Mary and all of Paul's family x

— Debbie Randall

Mary and the Higgins family,

I had the privilege and honour to work with Paul in the ER department when he came down to see a patient. Whenever I would call him, he came right away, which when you have a patient that you have no idea how to help, literally saved the day! Being an ER nurse, the palliative area is an area I don’t have experience in. I would call Paul and he would help initiate a plan for the family and patient and help immediately, providing peace and understanding to them in a horrible situation . His compassion and kindness were such an example of what nursing is, as sometimes we become jaded and less compassionate as the years go on. He always was the same no matter what. Full of patience, kindness and a gentleness that brought calmness to a stressful and emotionally difficult situation. Our team at the hospital has lost a huge part of what made us healthCARE...because Paul truly cared. He had an amazing and kind spirit which I will never forget.

— Ruth

I’m one of Paul’s Many Cousins. I would just like to extend to you my most heartfelt condolences at this awful time. I’m sure Paul will be deeply missed. God bless you all. Love from Lisa xxx

— Lisa Hulme

To Mary and family, I am so sorry to hear of Higgs' passing. I was part of his nursing intake In MRI and have so many special memories of that time. He was a true gentleman, talented, kind and compassionate. I can't believe we have lost him and I send my sincerest condolences to you Mary and the family.

— Alison (Campbell)

Mary, you must know that we ache deeply along with you and your family. There is little comfort many can offer at a time like this, other than love, support and uplifting words. May God bless you and the children in the weeks, months and years ahead. You are so deserving of His grace. Much love, Linda.

— Linda Swanepoel

My sincere condolences to the Higgins family. I will always be eternally grateful to Paul for his kindness and compassion to my wife Marilyn during her stay at A.R.C. with stage four lung cancer. He also showed me how I could care for her at home for the few days before her admittance to palliative care and eventually Holmberg House Hospice.He will be so missed. R.I.P Paul

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— roly achurch

My heartfelt condolences to the family Paul was an amazing palliative team member and made an incredible difference in numerous lives. May God bless you all and surround you with the strength and support during this time of sadness.

— Lorna Lockwood

Mary and family,

The palliative team is missing Paul so much. His enthusiasm, dry humour, and compassion for the patients we served cannot be replaced. If I’m missing him this much, I can’t imagine what you are going through.

For the Nurse Clinician and CNS meetings, he always brought the masculinity to the group, yet really was a palliative care nurse at heart.... kind, generous, gentle and a great advocate for what patients and families needed at the time.

I will continue to miss him as I know you all will.

Condolences to all of you.

Nicole

— Nicole

Mary, please know that my thoughts are with you and your family. At a time of such loss and sadness, there is a small comfort in knowing that you have love and support around you.

— Kathie Ramsay

Dear Mary and Family,

I am so sorry for the loss of your beloved Paul/Dad. I am a palliative care physician, now retired, and had the good fortune to work with Paul for a few years at Mission Hospital and Mission community. I always knew that Paul's assessments of palliative patients and families were spot on and I received feedback from several about his kindness and thoroughness with information sharing. I never once heard him grumble, an amazing thing really, given the nature of this work and his workload. I loved the way he would find little quirks at times about some of his patients and relay these to me with his fine sense of humor. He was very adept at reading people.
Paul helped me many times with difficult situations. One in particular was very trying and i could not manage without the help of a skilled nurse. Without hesitation Paul stepped up and gave his assistance, leading to a successful outcome for that patient and family. I will be forever grateful for his help that day. Please know that you are in my thoughts as is Paul.Our palliative care community is missing him greatly too, such a huge loss.

With love,

Lynne Potter

— Dr. Lynne Potter

To Mary and family. Paul joined our Sasquatch Outrigger team this past year. It was pleasure to have him as a teammate. Our sincere condolences.

— Lorna & Jose Costa

I am so sorry to hear of the loss of Higgs. I know what a lovely family you are& I remember hearing him play in the band in London with Martin & Mary Ro (Look at the moon she said....). I also remember his beautiful wedding day. My thoughts, love and prayers to you Mary Ro & your family.

— Hilary Moss

I Love my Uncle very much and I am sad to hear he pasted away Rest In Peace Uncle Paul

— India Marie Higgins

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https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/higgins-paul-david

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