Peter Olavi Laitinen



MAY 3, 2022

LAITINEN, Peter (Pekka) Olavi

February 10, 1951 – May 3, 2022 (71 years old)

Peter was born in Vaasa, Finland, to Aino and Pentti Laitinen on February 10, 1951. He was the eldest of 5 children. When Peter was 8 years old, the family immigrated to Canada and settled in Surrey, BC. It was a momentous journey of about 24 hours. Peter carried his baby brother, John, off the plane, down the stairs to the tarmac, to meet his father. Peter excelled in school and although English was his second language, his English was always perfect, both spoken and written. Peter grew up in the generation where the eldest son held the same occupation as his father and so Peter became a carpenter. Also of his generation, boys were taught that a proper man did not show emotions, nor did he talk about feelings and Peter excelled at this. Peter graduated BCIT with his Red Seal Interprovincial journeyman carpenter ticket. He went on to work with the crew that built the Alex Fraser Bridge, the longest spanning bridge in BC at that time, and it remained this way for decades. Over the years, Peter felt so fortunate to work along with his father and they built several family homes for Peter’s parents and Peter’s own family. He quickly worked his way up to Superintendent of PCL in BC and then in Alberta and held that position for about a decade. He was also proud to have built in Nagano and Niigata, Japan, and Num Yung Ju, South Korea. With his ease of learning new

languages, Peter excelled at working abroad and truly enjoyed the change of pace and adapting to new situations, languages and cultures. For the last decade, Peter could be found instructing the Cubans on hazardous material containment within a commercial complex in Varadero, Cuba and training a different team on completing proper concrete repairs within the cooling towers of Jibacoa, Cuba. Diana always accompanied Peter to Cuba, and whether working or vacationing there, they were treated like family by the Cubans Peter worked with and the others they met on vacation. The Cubans were always so excited to see them return. Peter's happiest times were golfing Varadero, Cuba, and Manzanilla Mexico, with the love of his life, his beloved Diana, golfing with him.

Peter was also honored and filled with joy to be present at each of his children's birth. Although his eldest child was his only son, Peter always referred to him as his "favorite son". A few years ago, Peter was filled with pride to be working alongside his favorite son, Tyler, a Superintendent welder, at McLymont Creek Run of the River Hydro Electric Project in northern BC, that his son-in-law had the construction labor contract for. He would come home on his week off and tell Diana how proud he was and how wonderful it felt to be working alongside his favorite son and living camp life with his favorite son. He was pleased that it spanned the generations of fathers and sons working together on construction projects. When he was older, he moved back to BC and proudly built a custom, luxurious home for his daughter, Jaimie. After spending a few years in BC with his wife, Diana, they moved back to Alberta where Peter continued to work.

Peter was a perfectionist with his work and it showed. He had integrity and provided fair prices for his work. He never felt too old to work and enjoyed showing new workers how to do things the right way. He had an easy going personality and always let others be their own person and never tried to influence their opinions. Peter was also very slow to anger and very gentle with everyone around him. He loved children and teasing them was a great pastime. Peter was

the strong, silent type, a real man’s man. He was a true alfa male; a real powerhouse who worked hard and played hard. He was strong as steel, tough as nails, and had a heart of gold. He was also as comfortable wearing jeans, a golf shirt and runners as he was wearing a suit, tie and dress shoes. Of course he preferred shorts and sandals on the beaches in Varadero, walking with Diana.

Peter enjoyed designing yards and building decks. He enjoyed gardening, planting and caring for his many flowers and trees and the sound of the water splashing in his water fountains on the deck. He also enjoyed watching the hummingbirds that were drawn to his flowers. Summers were the best times for Peter, relaxing and enjoying the multitude of flowers on his deck.

Peter felt fortunate that he could build a variety of things. He built office towers and got bored with that as it was very repetitious and so went out on his own and built and renovated homes and four plexes. He was trained by a professional painter and it showed in his work. He also worked in concrete and one of the projects he was most proud of was restoring a cenotaph in time for Remembrance Day for a Legion in Calgary. He restored sidewalks for the City of Calgary libraries, helped build the Westside Regional Rec Center, worked on seniors’ lodges and renovated malls and restaurants in Calgary. Peter was extremely intelligent and very artistic so he preferred to do home renovations as there was always something varied in the details. Recently one of his clients asked him to reproduce a picture from a magazine of a mudroom closet, complete with side storage shelves and a center seating bench. Her 10 year old son, a fan of Harry Potter, was shown the picture and then shown the finished product and he excitedly exclaimed, “Peter’s a wizard!” Peter was all smiles when he came home and told Diana what happened. Peter was a very polite man who prided himself with a perfect job every time.

Peter had the most incredible mind. He could wake himself up at whatever time he told himself when he went to bed each night. This set time could be varied by as little as 10 minutes the next day. He also could span time zones and countries with this skill and still wake himself up at the appointed time. He had an encyclopedic knowledge of the creatures of the oceans, the earth, and the sky. He also had this encyclopedic knowledge of different cultures, time periods, the galaxy, as well as various TV shows and the actors in them from as far back as the 1960s. He never forgot a face and this served him well when he was Superintendent working on various jobsites. Complicated and endless load tables that he memorized at BCIT stayed with him for a life time. When he got older, he learned a new skill with his friend, Ken, - hunting. He enjoyed bringing organic meat back home and making his own steaks and hamburger.

Diana enjoyed telling people that “Peter cooks better than an Italian grandma” and he was known for the extensive menus he was able to plan. Peter could BBQ like a pro, cook the entire Christmas dinner for a multitude of guests (while Diana made the pies), or make steak and lobster or any other kind of seafood. Anyone who was invited over for a meal looked forward to a sumptuous feast.

Peter never felt too old to work and couldn’t wait for spring this year after the pandemic halted his ability to work for the past 2 years. He was counting down the days of winter with the anticipation of exciting times to come soon. It was totally devastating to find out he had cancer in several places. It hit hard and fast.

Peter was a quiet man who never wanted a fuss to be made about him. He stayed home through to the end when battling cancer and does not want a service. He would request that in remembrance of him that you provide a random act of kindness to someone in need. He always thought that kindness was best. He was an amazing and very talented man.
Peter is lovingly remembered by his beloved wife, Diana Lee Smith; his mom, Aino Laitinen; his favorite son, Tyler Glen Laitinen (Natalie); his 2 daughters, Jaimie

Leanne Laitinen, her 2 sons, Evan and Quinn Finnie; and Cierra Nicole Rudy (Matthew); his sisters, Helena Holton (Lance); Kristina deVeer, and his brother John (Jukka) Laitinen and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his father, Pentti, his brother, Matti and recently by his brother-in-law, Howard de Veer.

Messages of Condolence

Lapsuuden kaveri Pekka, aika vähän muistan yhteisestä ajastamme, olen sinua pari vuotta vanhempi, mutta kuitenkin muistan sinut hyvin. Mustan ajan kun tulin tietoiseksi teidän lähdöstä ja tuntui kovin kaukaiselta maalta uusi kotimaanne. Äitisi on kirkonkirjojen mukaan minun kummitätini, isäsi muistan mukavana miehenä josta vanhempanikin pitivät. Asuimme silloin jo Kotirannalla ja lähellä asui Koikkalaiset jotka lähtivät samaan aikaan. On ollut mukava seurata Helenin välityksellä FB:ssä teidän elämäänne, Aino ja äitimme pitivät yhteytä paljon ja hänen kauttaan kuulimme mitä teille kuului. Harmi että emme ole päässeet koskaan sinne käymään. Siunaan sinun elämääsi ja sinun läheistesi elämää. Liityt siihen joukkoon jonka saamme tulevaisuudessa kohdata. Lämmin osanotto sekä Dianalle että teille kaikille läheisille. Tapani ja Lea (os. Kapell) tiedän että sisarukseni myös lähettävät lämpimät osanotto terveiset.

— Tapani ja Lea Vieri

Condolences from our family to yours, may his memory live long and strong Peter is now young and residing along with his dad and brother looking down from Heaven with love in his

— Susan Booth

Helen - how sad to hear of your brothers passing. Thinking of you.

— Pauline Draper

Very sorry to hear of the passing of Peter. I’m blessed to know Kristina very well. My grandparents were sponsored by the Laitonen family to come to Canada after they had immigrated first. I as their first granddaughter am very grateful for the friendship they shared for our families to know each other!
It’s amazing to hear what a beautiful person Peter was! I’m sure his traits will follow in the generations!
Thank you Peter for the amazing son, brother, husband, father and uncle you are/were here on earth.
Blessings of peace and comfort to you all who loved him.
I as a widow myself- bless you Diana with strength and comfort. One day at a time, one hour at a time- sometimes a minute at a time.
Until we meet again.

— Elaine DiCastri Price

I am deeply sorry about the loss of Peter. As you grieve, know that I am remembering and honoring him. I’ll remember Peter in many positive ways-with a big smile and a great sense of humor, and always had a great story to tell. I had the privilege of working closely with Peter at the carpenter shop in the McLymont project where I witness how talented Peter was working wood. On our spare time I help him build bird houses to give away to co-workers for their kids, cutting boards etc...he was a master.
Will always remember and honor him...Rest In Peace Peter.
Carlos

— Carlos Cordeiro

Peter had something special about him. I think that’s why we hit it off so well when we met at a golf tournament. You never know when you get to meet a person like Peter, but its always a privilege when it happens. The eulogy was beautifully written and I will definitely be honoring him with an act of kindness.

— Mike Loptson

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