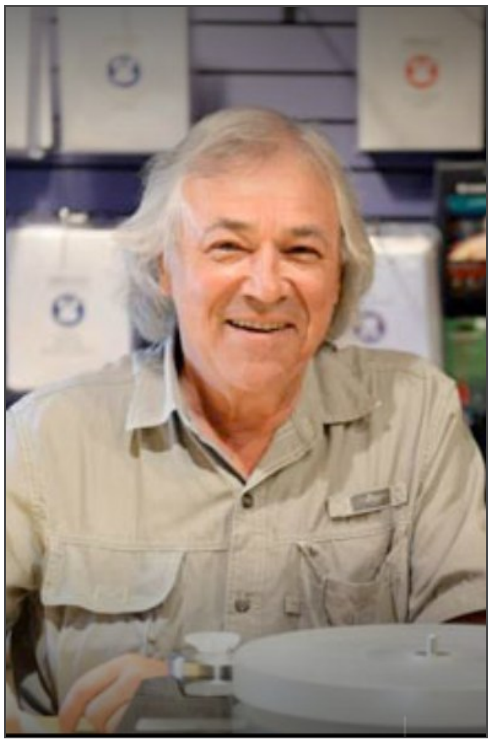
"Harry" Vern Sotropa

APRIL 8, 2022



On April 8, 2022 our soulmate, father, grandfather and friend to many passed in his sleep, joining his parents who had gone before him. Left to honour his memory is Pat, soulmate and wife of 44 years; beloved daughter Alicia (Patrick) and grandchildren Jade and Van of which he was so proud. Vern also leaves his sisters Eileen Jones and Laurel Brown.

Harry and Pat opened the doors to Harry's Hi Fi in 1983 with Harry supplying his immense knowledge of all things audio and a passion for the people he conversed with on a daily basis. Whether in business or in life, Harry accepted people wherever they were at and made friends of many. For Harry, it wasn't work if you loved what you did.

Harry was a remarkable human being who loved fiercely, laughed easily, and never lost his curiosity for learning. A Celebration of Life will happen at a later date but there are so many ways to celebrate Harry's well-lived life right now. The family asks that you spin some vinyl, read a good book or get your hands dirty in the garden or honour him in a way that seems fitting. Harry would have liked that.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation in Harry's name to the Salvation Army (www.salvationarmy.ca/donation); after all, it was where he crafted his fabulous sense of fashion.

“And in the end

The love you take

Is equal to the love you make”

- Lennon & McCartney

Messages of Condolence

You were a blessed soul Vern. You will be so deeply missed. No words can describe the sorrow we feel.
Our hearts and big hugs are with you, Pat and family.

— Laverne and Morgan Williams

i loved coming to your store to see you and pat you were such a nice guy, i'm very glad i knew you. i will always treasure the turntable and service i got from you....but most of all the love for music we all share....gonna miss u lad rest in piece

— shel north

I will miss my phone calls from you Harry! Thinking of you Pat and your family.xoxo

— Rose Sinclair- Gentec Intl

The majority of my interactions with 'Harry' were over the phone, but every single one was memorable. He was indeed a remarkable human being and he always made me laugh. He reminded me to never take myself too seriously. Rest in peace, Vernon. And to Pat, my warmest thoughts and prayers are with you.

— Jeff Kowerchuk

Harry was irreplaceable! If I had to use one word to describe him it would be “HOOT”. Harry was a hoot. Never one to complain or need bothered, he was truly a glass half full kind of guy. It was a pleasure to have known him and to know now he’s given strength to Pat to carry on. Much love….

— Agata

Harry was one of a kind and yes kind is the key word. Lovely guy who always made me laugh. Rest In Peace my friend.

— Rash Rai

You are missed Uncle Vern! The nickname "Mad Dog" will live on through JJ. All my condolences to Pat, Alicia, Dylan and all those that loved and miss Harry!

— Paul Ekberg

Pat and family I am so sorry for your loss. I did not know Harry but I know there was an amazing strong love between you. I will always love the story of a pin you were wearing that Harry had bought you at a concert. You were still wearing it at least 30 years later. Cherish the memories

— Suzann

To Pat, Alicia and Dylan, please accept my condolences on Harry’s, much to soon, passing. Vern, God speed on your new journey, likely at 33 1/3 rpm.

— Randy gill

My Dad bought the turntable of his dreams, an Oracle. My father passed a short time later. I was 13. The stereo came to me two years ago, a 40 year old machine that needed love. A long journey began. Last year on Family Day Weekend it came back home fully restored. There were no words to thank Harry and Pat for the countless hours they spent to help me. He brought back the gift of music, so so many memories, and a piece of my Dad. Amazing humans with talent that I have wept in joy over. When I heard the news, I said words on the inside that I heard Harry say aloud and often (especially while fiddling with the tone arm lever he had to fix). A master of his craft. A life lived with passion. A great human. Tonight, I play a record and am grateful that our path crossed with Harry's. Our deepest sympathies to Pat and family.

— Susan Letsche & Derek Brenner

Pat and Family, very sorry for your loss, he will be greatly missed!

— Harvey Chrunik

To Pat and family,
I am so sorry for your loss. I loved Harry and always enjoyed his company. Coming into the shop and talking music was something I really valued. We had some laughs and I loved hearing Harry tell stories (with the most colorful language) about shows he went to. He was a champion of live music in our city and was always quick to praise and shout-out acts he loved. If we can learn from Harry it is to savor everything. From his garden, his family and music Harry had so much love in his heart and I know he had that love come back to him. Rest In Peace, Harry.

— Ryan Hicks

I’m so sorry Pat. My condolences to you and your family. You and Harry always made such a lasting impression on me. I was your UPS man from 1988 til 1994. You always made me feel so welcome and I will always cherish those memories. It was an honour to do business with you and know you as wonderful human beings.

— Mark Dalla-Vicenza

Over the 35 years I was a patron of Harry’s HiFi, I came to know that there was no such thing as a ‘short visit’ or a ‘quick chat’ with Vern. There was always a disc “you have to hear!”, or new speakers, or a turntable or cartridge, or the latest digital audio system “damn near as good as analogue, ha ha.” “Have you seen this? … oh ya gotta check this out!” He was a fine and knowledgeable salesman, but his love of music and sound came first and went far beyond the showroom floor. He was irrepressible. And if you shared his passion, “had ears“, and, better yet, had musical tales to tell, you could be instant family. Vern burned bright, lived tunes and loved every moment of what he did. Pat, my sincere condolences go out to you and the family.

— Bruce Steele

Pat,

I am so sorry to hear about Verne. I can’t imagine the loss you are experiencing - I know you loved him deeply and respected him immensely.

I will definately read a book in his memory and get my hands dirty in the garden. I will have to leave the vinyl spinning for someone else…

Joey (Joanne Seitz)

— Joanne Seitz

Dear Pat and family:

I am so very sorry for your loss. You and Harry (Vern) brought music back into my life. I am forever indebted to you both.

John Phillips

— John Phillips

Vern “Harry” was a audiophile legend and took customer service and engagement to the next level. I didn’t know Vern personally but I treasured my interactions at the store over the years. I made my first purchase from him almost 30 years ago as a 17 year old and always appreciated how he worked to create new audiophiles by letting us try out equipment before we purchased it. Vern will be greatly missed by all that appreciated great sounding music. My condolences to Pat and the family.

— Steve Blayone

Vern, Thank you for being our dear friend. You shined so bright. Your humour shocked one of my sons when they were teenagers and delighted the other. We will miss you more than we can say. So sorry Pat and family - sending our love.

— Fiona and Dale Yano

I always enjoyed my time with Harry, saddened that it was to long ago that we had a chance to engage in his wild and uplifting humor (time is borrowed).
CJTR radio was never the same after Harry left. His weekly program made me tune in for the music history and selections of artist that he loved to show case. What really kept me interested was what he was going to say live on air lol, man he took it to the edge a few times, anyone that was a fan of his show would say the same thing. Our condolences to you Pat and Family. A legend truly lost.

— Carlo & Heather Giambattista

Harry was a truly one of kind person. I will miss him dearly. All my love and thoughts to the entire family

— dick Tuerlings

To Pat and your family, my sincere condolences on your loss. While I was fairly new to experiencing your amazing store and service, just over the last 3 years, it's not often that you feel so welcomed in a place of business, and the conversations with you both have always been a highlight of that particular day. Although I didn't know him well, I always left the store thinking Harry was quite the wonderful character, and his knowledge was amazing to me. Such genuinely lovely people. I am so sorry for your loss, and may the wonderful memories carry you through this difficult time.

— Cathy Wiebe

Vern will be missed greatly. Anyone that knew him, was familiar with his passion for life, music and flowers. His positive energy lit the room! Thinking of you Pat, and your family, during this most difficult time.

— Laurie Idema-Wood

He was my friend!
Rest In Peace Harry.

— Garry Louden

Harry was great guy. Bought our first stereo from him from Custom Stereo on Scarth Street. Still have that stereo and some other gear he sold us over the years. Harry was extremely knowledgeable, an amazing salesman and equally amazing human being. Our condolences to Pat and his entire family. Tom & Noreen Sax

— Tom Sax

Dear Pat and family, I am so sorry for your loss. I will miss your voice and your smile Harry. We have known each other since you started your store in 1983. Our last major project together was Susan Letsche Oracle Premiere. We spent so much time over the phone trying to find solutions and make it happen for Susan and we did ! I always had much respect for you and Pat and it always a pleasure meeting or speaking with you. Rest in peace my friend.

— Jacques Riendeau, Oracle Audio Technologies

The indelible imprint that Harry has made on not only the Regina music scene but the international music scene cannot be overstated. Harry was as much an educator as he was life-long student of music m. When we experience music we are not only experiencing the musical performance, but the timbre, inflections and overarching feeling of the performance. Harry's acuity toward these musical subtles was beyond compare. His vast knowledge and experience informed the musical experiences of countless musicians of whom many dominate the Canadian musical landscape today. Harry embodied the elusive "last ear" for many musical project, meaning before a recording was released Harry was given the recording in advance to ensure the recording was of the highest wualottyy … in this way he left an indelible, mark on the musical output of every musician he touched, and consequently a mark on the overall Canadian music scene. A cursory study of Canadian musicians that came of age during the late 80s early 90s in Saskatchewanwill show than an an inordinate number were influenced by the fidelity introduced by Harry (Vern) Coupled with a infectious love for life and an insatiable need for experiencing fidelity has left an lasting impression on ever musician he had ever come into contact with.. I believe I can speak for all the musicians that have ever met you… Harry influenced us beyond what he may have realized, and cultivated our ears to be unrelenting changing the way we performed music for the better;My sympathies to Pat and your family, Harry you'll not be forgotten

— Kelly Craig

Harry , wonderful person , glad to have known for years .
Pat thoughts with you and family

— Kelly Wood

When we first moved to Regina 25 years ago I needed a new home stereo, so I called a friend Dave Fries who owned Cave Studios at the time here in town and asked him where I should go. He immediately said “Harry’s HiFi”. Coming from Calgary, store names that started with “Harry’s” were like second hand stuff, and I told Dave that. Dave’s advice, “Dean, just go.” So, I went.

We were greeted by a young woman with bright orange hair (or was it pink) and numerous tattoos who had more audio knowledge in her little finger than I had amassed in my almost 40 years. They had something for every budget including super high end stuff and the latest and greatest.

Then Vern (Harry) came over and talked to us. He asked me all sorts of questions about the music styles we listened to, what the livingroom was like, etc. then came up with options. We have a very unique open beam side split with a vaulted ceiling so Vern wasn’t sure what might and might not work. I left with a trunk full of equipment and didn’t pay a cent! He simply said “try these out to see what works in the space and bring back what doesn’t. We’ll settle up then.” No credit card taken, no deposit, nothing. A few days later I did return what didn’t work work in the space and we did settle up.

Because it’s now 25 year old equipment it has no wireless connectivity. I was lamenting this to my son and how much I still very much love the sound of this equipment. It still sounds as warm and wonderful as that day I brought it home. So he bought me a very memorable gift in the form of an Airport so I could stream to my stereo, extending its life and my enjoyment of that warmth, but also the memory of my experience with Vern and his staff.

Over the years I have purchased much equipment from Vern for myself and my

family, and taken people in to introduce them to Vern. Anyone who knew Vern would know him as a man passionate about all things audio and who took a certain amount of glee in showing off the latest and coolest piece of equipment he just got in (he was like a little kid), taking time to educate along the way.

Losing Vern is a loss to his family and friends, but also to the people of Regina. He will be remembered by many.

Pat, our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this time.

— Dean Lott

So sorry for your loss Pat, I was at the store lately and Harry and I worked on a problem with my turntable. I didn't have it with me but he was interested and wanted to solve the problem..I didn't get into the city to often and was looking forward to seeing Harry.
I wasn't expecting him to troubleshoot as long as he did and unfortunately we didn't solve the issue. He said well "we know how to take it apart " and laughed...if you want to try it when you get home or next time you're in town bring your turntable in..... sorry to say that never happened.
He was never in a hurry to get you out of the store....
I will miss him.
My condolences to you Pat and family.

— Brett North

Saturdays in the shop, talking about life and discovering new music together will always be some of my fondest memories. He was the coolest cat I knew. My condolences to Pat and the family.

— Garrett Schous

We are so sorry to hear of you loss. Both Harry and you were so nice to me whenever I came into your store with my endless questions. Harry's passion for music and excellent sound never failed to amaze and inspire me. Keep spinning those records Harry.
We are sending big hugs to you and your family.

— Lorne and Sandy Serbu

So very sad to hear of Vern / Harry's passing ... my sincere condolences to Pat and his entire family, as well as all of Vern's friends and loyal customers. Like many folks, I first walked into Harry's Hi-Fi (back in the late 80's) not really knowing anything about audio equipment, but that afternoon Vern spent almost two hours helping me pick out my first truly killer NAD / B&W system. His passion for music and audio reproduction was genuinely infectious. Over the next three decades I would rely solely on Vern's (and Pat's) opinion and knowledge, gradually adding to and improving my system time and again. Such a kind, funny and friendly guy. Vern was one of a kind ... it was an honour to have known him, if only for a short while.

— Terry Demeter

Vern was a larger than life personality with a big heart. His wonderful sense of humour are among the many fond memories I have of Vern that go back some four decades. He will be greatly missed. My deepest condolences to Pat and family. RIP Vern.

— John Reid

Those that we hold closest to our hearts never truly leave us. They live on in the kindness they have shared and the love they have brought into our lives. My deepest condolences for the loss of your soul mate, may comfort find its way to you. He will be truly missed in the community, he was a legend! ♥

Tracey

— Tracey

Going to Harry’s HIFI was always one of the things that I truly enjoyed in life, always something new to appreciate in the Audio world and always great conversation, exchange of ideas and more than a few good laughs! Pat and family, I am so sorry for your loss, words cannot express the loss you must feel. We have lost a true master of the turntable, a true master of conversation, and a true master of being a good human being, and the man had great taste in music!!!! I will spin some vinyl tonight in your honour Vern!

— David Williamson

I first met Harry in 2005 when I started to visit the store as a sales rep. It was apparent right from the start that this would be an interesting and pleasurable relationship and I looked forward to every consequent visit. We talked, we argued, we laughed. Harry’s passion, humour and irreverence were refreshing and inspiring. He loved to garden. He loved music. He loved his work. And he especially loved Pat and their family. I have a picture in my mind of Harry and Pat. We had finished a dinner out together one evening and had just said our goodbyes and headed off in different directions. After several steps I turned around to see Harry and Pat laughing and holding hands as they walked away. It put a smile on my face and still does. I’m going to miss you Harry. And to Pat, my most sincere and deepest condolences.

— Murray Cardiff

What a sad day. have known Harry for 50 plus years. He was a wonderfull person, a source of unlimited musical knowledge and a friend to all who were lucky enough to know him. He leaves an empty space that can never be filled. My deepest sympathy to Pat and their family

— Dean Holzapfel

Really sorry about Vern. Condolences to Pat and family. Vern was always there when I needed him while in Regina. He did not mince his words but I always valued his advice. Now that we are in Toronto we will continue to use Harry's speakers.

— Paul Gingrich

Wow, this comes as a big shock to me being sent "Harry's" obituary via email from a friend of mine.
It was in the 70's when I purchase my first B&O system from "Harry" when he was at Custom Stereo.
Recently a few months back Pat got me started on streaming my music with a Bluesound Node & she was right I have not used my CD player in over a year and a half.
I had also taken a virgin boxed set of Elvis vinyl for Vern and some MQA digital jazz albums that Pat had requested.
My condolences to Pat and family and "RIP" to the wonderful guy that got me interested in sound.

— Danny Zand

First walked into the shop nearly 35 years ago, around the summer of 1987, to spend my pay on my first decent stereo. Found more than a stereo, found a friend. Friends. A whole damned subculture of audio freaks. All the music he turned me onto, happy I was able to do the same now and then. Or to run into him and Pat at a show, or the jazz fest in S'toon. I'm in Toronto now, and remember him talking about SK's biggest export way back when, which went something like "people from Saskatchewan can work anywhere because the work ethic is built into us. Compared to someone from a big city, we'll work harder and beat that guy at any day of the week." The nuggets that stick with us. One of a kind. My deepest condolences to Pat and the whole extended family, so sorry for your loss.

— Eli Robillard

Our deepest condolences to Pat and family on this profound loss. A person can be measured in how their spirit carries on through those they have touched. We hope you are comforted by the many who carry Vern's spirit, and are able to find some solace sharing irreplaceable memories. ~ Malcolm & the HiFi Attic team

— Malcolm Rolfsen

So sad to hear of Harry’s passing. He was an instant friend to anyone who had a ear for music and never lost patience in helping people choose what was right for them. May you take comfort Pat, in knowing how much Harry meant to so many.

— Tamara Therrien

Harry and I were radio colleagues. His jazz program was a gem, highlighted by his superb taste in music and a sense of humour that was casually unpredictable. A visit to the store was always special. He knew I shared his love for Ella Fitzgerald. In one his showrooms he situated me before a stereo setup and asked me to close my eyes. Seconds later Ella was singing Night and Day. It was on vinyl, but it was if she and the band were actually performing right in front of us. It was remarkable. Harry was an audio wizard who treated his customers with respect and it was always great to see him. Pat, please accept our deepest condolences on the passing of this good man,

Eric Forbes and Debra Clark

— Eric Forbes

My deepest condolences to Pat and family I was very sad to hear about the passing of Harry. Harry started me on my adventure into great Audio about 35 years ago he was very dedicated to helping his customers realize great sound. Sadly our loss on earth will make Heaven sound better with Vern there Rest in peace

— Jeff Schmidt

Dear Pat and family....I have just read every single message and could copy and paste just about every single word into my message of condolences. I hope these messages have brought you comfort, joy, and make you super proud of the great man your husband was. There is truly a common theme...Harry was loved by all, we all loved his sense of humor, how much he made us laugh, his amazing knowledge of audio and music and his passion to share all of it with everyone. I feel truly, truly blessed to have known him as a customer, but mostly as a dear friend that I absolutely adored! I feel the very same about you! You were an incredible team!! This guy, your Harry, is unforgettable!! Truly one of a kind with a huge loving heart. He will live on in my memories and will be right here every time I enjoy my Bang & Olufsen Beosound 2000. Never giving it up! It is even more valuable and precious to me now! Rest in peace Harry! Missing you tons already! Much love to you Pat and family!

Love Wanda Hildebrand

— Wanda Hildebrand

I was so saddened when I recently heard that "Harry" had passed on to that great listening room in the great beyond. My inner being is warmed by the memories of popping downstairs to say hi and the memories of how "Harry" revived my wonderful old Technics Turntable that had been in storage for about a quarter of a century. I am so grateful that my love of vinyl was rekindled by my good fortune to have crossed paths with "Harry" and Pat. I'm sure that, except for Covid-19, we would have visited Regina a few times over the past couple of years and I know we would have stopped by to say hello. Pat, Kathryn and I offer our deepest condolences and hope that the wonderful memories you shared with "Harry" will bring countless smiles to your face.

— Tony Cote

Just learned of Vern’s passing. What a shock. Having known him for some 45 years, many memories. Hopefully we will be able to attend the celebration of life. Pat, so sorry for your loss. You two made a great team. Harry’s personality had no match. Always entertaining. He will be entertaining where ever he is. ‘Til we meet again Harry. Bon voyage.

— Jo and Larry

So sorry to learn of this Pat and family. I have many fond memories of Vern growing up. In the garden, doing his tai-chi in the park, his infectious laugh and humour, among many others. I'll miss Vern's warm and welcoming nature and always cherish those memories. Sending our love to you all.

— Alex Ryback

Terribly sorry for your loss, Pat and family. Vern made a lasting impression on me when I was growing up. He was hilarious and so different to my other friend's parents. He played a big part in introducing me to some of the music I love to this day, as well as an appreciation of really great sound - something that also continues to this day. I know he will be missed by many.

— Brett Hamm

I knew Verne from martial arts world long ago and from my time at Audio warehouse he was knowledgeable and helpful. My condolences to you Pat and family for your loss.

— Mark YoungI

Hi Pat,

After 20+ years, I decided to let my B&W speakers go that I bought from you guys. Thought I would see how the shop was going, was so sorry to hear that Vern had passed.

Condolences from us in BC.

— Peter Mukheibir

Bewildered and saddened by Harry's passing.Condolences to Pat and family. Harry had a wonderfully glowing personality and always made welcome to any patron who crossed his path in the many,many tears he provided answers and products through his seemingly endless knowledge in audio wizardry.

Always able to find high fidelity solutions for your audio needs.

I have known Vern since high school and used to come across him while simultaneously out on weekend tours when he played Congas back with Transmigrated Soul.

Later he was my instructor with Freedom Karate.

I also used his services since his Custom Stereo days (when he acquired his nickname Harry).

Harry's passing has left an aching void in the world of High Fidelity worship. RIP my friend!

— Norm Grohs