

David Jonathan Ainsworth Symington

MARCH 10, 2024

David (Dave) Jonathan Ainsworth Symington



January 26, 1956 - March 10, 2024

On Saturday March 10, 2024, our brother, Dave passed away from complications with pneumonia.

He created lasting impacts on everyone he met throughout his life.

Dave was born in Epsom, England in 1956.

He was a welcome younger brother for his two older sisters Vivien and Merrill. He was a precious addition for his parents Evelyn and David Symington.

The family immigrated to Vancouver, British Columbia in 1957, and welcomed two more siblings Louise and Don. The family moved to Bellevue Washington for four years before settling in Kingston, Ontario in 1966. This is where the youngest sibling Claire was born.

After many years living in Kingston, Dave felt a calling to go back to the west coast. In 1974 at eighteen years old he moved back to Vancouver.

In 1975 Dave had a diving accident while swimming at one of Vancouver's beaches.

He suffered a spinal cord injury resulting in quadriplegia.

Dave's life took an obvious turn at this moment, a turn that he later noted as being one that saved his life. Dave conquered many challenges which allowed him the rewards of countless successes. Dave not only broke down barriers for himself but garnered a heightened understanding and empathy for others. This empathic approach to life was bolstered by many academic achievements.

Dave received an undergraduate degree from Queen's University, a Master's of Education from University of Victoria and a certificate of Behavioural Science from St. Lawrence College.

Dave quietly offered himself to the world through many outlets. His formal day job was a disability advisor for University of British Columbia. A role he excelled at due to his unwavering ability to lend a listening ear and provide thoughtful insights. Another one of Dave's skillsets thrived in the realm of music. Dave was a drummer, playing in many bands over the years and was an avid concert goer. In 1985 he co-founded the Vancouver Adapted Music Society with fellow musician Sam Sullivan. Together they merged their love of music with accessibility, addressing gaps in the music industry that existed for disabled communities. Dave and Sam also co-founded the Jericho Disabled Sailing Association, providing increased access to and awareness of adaptive sailing. Dave absolutely loved sailing solo, in English Bay. This sense of freedom is something Dave wanted everyone to be able to experience.

Dave lived an amazing life, always challenging himself to exciting experiences. He went skydiving, learned to fly a plane and traveled the globe. Dave lived life to the fullest. If you met Dave, you were sure to share a laugh, if you knew him well, you were sure to find his sense of humour contagious.

His advocacy work and creative endeavours were all done with an air of humility.

There is so much to learn from the way Dave interacted with the world and those in it. He was a patient man and very spiritual. He could connect with others easily. Dave was very creative. He wrote stories, poems and lyrics and did artwork often. Dave was known to enjoy a tasty baked good, especially a slice of peach pie. He loved the ethically diverse food offered in Vancouver and around the world, especially if there was a bottle of hot sauce near by. He was a strong advocate and deep thinker. He was kind and open. Dave appreciated the little things in life. He always kept a pair of drumsticks on with him at all times waiting for the opportunity to play.

His way of thinking and living rubbed off on everyone that knew him. Dave sincerely wants you to have a good life.

Dave is predeceased by his father David, mother Evelyn and sister Louise. He leaves behind his siblings, Vivian (Merle), Merrill (Henny), Don (Catherine), Claire (John); his nieces and nephews, Nick (Krystal), Andrew (Julie), Jess (Scott), Don, Erik, Emily (Aaron), Jordan, Frank, Rhys, and Theo.

Our family is heartbroken yet filled with gratitude for being a part of Dave's story. We will miss our brother, our uncle, our friend, our confidant, our Davey Boy. We are sending so much love out to all of Dave's network of friends, we know it's a large community and we are comforted knowing his memory will live on in so many hearts.

A CELEBRATION-OF-LIFE will be held on April 22,2024 at the Heritage Hall in Vancouver from 12pm to 3pm

In lieu of flowers Dave would have loved donations of your time and/or money to go towards organizations that prioritize disabled and/or chronically ill communities, unhoused communities, underprivileged and marginalized communities.

"The beat goes on."

Messages of Condolence

I send my sincere condolences during this time of deep sorrow. The Bible gives a hope of comfort and promise your loved one will live again on a peaceful paradise earth when death will be no more. (John 5:28, 29; Revelation 21:4)

— **Gale Ellis**

Thinking of you and your family

— **Robin**

Vivien and family.

I'm so sorry to hear of David's passing. Thinking of you.

Elizena, Bryan and family

— **Elizena McIntyre**

Dearest Vivien and family; I'm so surprised and saddened to hear of Dave's death, and this time of sadness for all. The writeup for him is so very well written. He was such a great guy to know. We shared many laughs together over the years of family meals and get-togethers I was able to share. Much love and all blessings.

Wendy Yacoboski

— **Wendy Yacoboski**

I'm so sorry to hear of David's passing...my deepest condolences to his family and friends. David was an amazing man, I will always remember his passion for his work and contributions at Open Learning Agency, where I knew him as a kind soul with a wicked sense of humour. And always the drumsticks! RIP David, gone WAY too soon.

— **Carol Sliziak**

I was so sorry to hear of Dave's passing. Sending deepest condolences to all the family. I know you'll miss him terribly .

— **Roberta Brady**

Condolences to family and close friends of Dave - and I'm sure there were plenty. I was one of the people Sam and Dave wrangled to sit on the board of Vancouver Adapted Music Society back in the 90s when I was ED of Pacific Music, the provincial music industry organization. Then I'd see him when I did PR for KicksArt Disability Arts. It wasn't unusual to run into Dave at a restaurant or concert. I'll miss his grin and his ever positive outlook.

— **Ellie O'Day**

I am a person with physical disability & came to know Dave through a disability resource agency. Dave was a thoughtful & empathetic person. He never hesitated to give sound & valuable advice to his peers based on his own experience. Although personally I do not have a chance to listen to his music in person or to try the adapted sailing which he promoted, I have no doubt that he made indelible contributions to the disabled communities in Vancouver & beyond. Dave, may you continue to beat the drum from above so that we know you are watching over us!

— **Hin Lee**

Many fond memories of growing up with the Symington Clan. Dave was a remarkable man breaking down so many barriers in his lifetime. I will remember him with pride and humour. My thoughts are with you all.

— **Jane Hamilton**

With deepest sympathies. My love for the drums and drumming was cemented with a visit to the Symington Family home on King street and there in all its glory was a big booming drum kit. I just stared at it in awe. Thank you for that and a life well lived. RIP and sympathies to all Dave's family and friends.

— **Ian Hamilton**

Deepest condolences to the Symington family. I was a friend of his sister Louise (Lou) growing up in the 70s. I knew David both before and after his accident and never ceased to be amazed at his resilience going forward and seeing his many accomplishments over a life well lived. I was happy to briefly reconnect with him and Claire in Victoria before moving to Nova Scotia. I am confident his work and his legacy will continue for many, many years to come.

— **Angela Robichaud**

Please accept my sincere condolences to the Symington family. I was friends with Lou during and after high school, and met Dave several times. I was touched by the tribute; he turned into a most remarkable man.

— **Laura Savard**

Sincere condolences to the Symington family.

I knew Dave and partied with him as a teenager. I went to school with Dave at KCVI. We also lived not far apart. I grew up on Centre St. Lots of us would gather at the Manor (underage of course) and had lots of laughs.

You must be so proud of the man he became.

RIP David

— **Kim Dickson**

Please accept our sincere condolences in the loss of your brother Dave. Who as I am reading the comments above, was one exceptional human being. Living with his disability and making the most out of his life is truly exceptional. May you all cherish the wonderful memories he has left you. Love the Gordon's

— **Alicia Gordon**

My most deepest sympathies to all of Dave's family and friends!

— **Stacey Hickman**

Thanks for this great summary of David's life. I remember him when he was one of my students at St. Lawrence College and knew he moved to B.C. but nothing more. It doesn't surprise me he accomplished so much - a talented man in many ways - also somewhat fearless. Knowing I drove a motorcycle when weather permitted, he expressed interest in having a ride - HOW would we do that? I asked. "Just tie me on" was his reply! We never did do that trip but his life did have many other great adventures.

— **Bill Kirby**

Thanks to my Mom, Ira who is now 86 and living in Kingston calling saying “ Son, we know this family” that I was able to know of this reunion with family and extended community. I’ll be happy to share a memory on April 22nd.

— **David Pancham**

.Dave was a good friend in our younger years.Lots of memories.My deepest condolences to you Don and family GordonDavis (aka fuzzy) Kingston

— **Susan radin**

My most genuine condolences to the Symington Family. Although I have never known him personally, but just by looking at his face shows much compassion, empathy, and a spiritually generous soul helping many people reach their own goals. He is definitely a man of great strengths and I'm sorry to hear of his loss at this difficult time for the family.

— **Toni Accettura, SSDF**

My sincerest condolences to the family and my best friend from the mid 70s, Donny.

Dave inspired me from the first time I met him in the family home in his paraplegic condition as he could drive his own van and he introduced me to the amazing album Crime of the Century on his fantastic sound system.

He certainly demonstrated a life worth living and fighting for despite the challenges.

Much love to the family and a big hug to Donny, your long lost friend, Steve.

— **Stephen Brown**

Dave was a real good dude! I met him in Vancouver when I moved there in the early 2000's and I always enjoyed running into him at coffee shops, gigs, or just out and about. The guy always made me laugh and just appreciate things. I am glad I knew him and will miss him. Condolences to his loved ones!

— **Garry Angus**

I worked with Dave in the post-secondary system and government; we also had friends in common and so I got to know him socially as well. Dave was probably the most laid-back person I've ever known. He was also one of the richest in the sense that he understood what's truly important in life, and he lived his life to the fullest. Among his many accomplishments, perhaps the most significant was his extraordinary pioneering work in the area of disability and sexuality. Dave's contribution in this realm was powerful and as admirable as it was necessary. The world is a far better place because Dave Symington was here. As with so many others who knew him, I will miss him. Sleep well my colleague and friend.

— **Sue Buttner**

I went to high school with Dave, he actually was my first boyfriend. Over the years I thought of him many times. I always remembered him as such a good person. He turned out to be a remarkable man. Rest in peace Dave ☐

— **Sue Davison**

I was so saddened and shocked to hear of Dave's passing. My deepest condolences to his family and friends. I had the pleasure of working with Dave at the Office for Disability Issues in the mid-1990's. He was an amazing person with a unique spirit and he touched many lives thru his work, musical career and the friendships he made over the years. Rest in Peace Dave.

— **Leslie Cox**

The world has lost a gem. My heart goes out to All who loved and shared time with Dave. The true caring, kindness, humor, and humility of Dave has to be experienced to be believed. I am blessed to have had our shared experiences and will always treasure that time..... his spirit lives on !

Nameste,

ayne

— **Ayne**

You've been on my mind a lot my friend. Thoughts of our conversations play over and over in my head. Even though I cannot see you I still feel your presence. Your wisdom stays with me and is a guide for me daily. Be at peace my friend and I hope where you are, the coffee and conversations are great. Much love and respect always.

— **Eric Molendyk**

Dear Don. I'm so sorry to hear of Dave's passing. I would love to chat with you! I'm on Facebook. Please send me a message. Lovepenny wedd

— **Penny wedd**



<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/symington-david-jonathan-ainsworth>

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