



Duncan Dean Cooke

February 28, 1959 to October 27, 2020



It is with great sorrow that the family of Duncan Cooke announces his peaceful passing at the age of 61 with loved ones by his side. Duncan is survived by wife Pamela Taylor; daughters Michelle and Meagan, son; Brandon (Mei), beloved extended family the Taipanas; Chad, Josie-Connor, John and Cecilia. Brothers; Bradford and David (Donna), sister; Sally (George) and many wonderful nieces, nephews and cousins.

When asked, Duncan said the best thing in his life were the people along the way. He rarely forgot a face or a name and always loved to socialize and listen to

stories and tall tales. Duncan loved his close and extended family and treasured many friends and colleagues throughout the North. He loved socializing with friends, music, concerts, his fishing Lodge, Gordon Lake, history and biographies. He was always active; canoeing, fishing, playing old-timers hockey, travelling, snowshoeing and golfing with his buddies, every spring he looked forward to the Aurora Open. In his younger days he was an avid white water kayaker and backcountry skier and enjoyed some long and adventurous canoe expeditions. In later years, Duncan enjoyed attending many music concerts, with most holidays being planned around the musicians in the area. Duncan attended concerts on three continents and joked that Eric Clapton's roadies may have worried he was a stalker as Duncan attended so many of his concerts-conspicuously towering over other attendees in the front rows.

Duncan was born in Trois Rivieres, Québec and the family relocated to Hinton, Alberta when he was young. This is where his love of mountains and outdoor sports developed. After a move to Montréal in his young teen years, the family suffered the loss of their father Dean Cooke, their mother, Maxine, guided her four children forward on her own. After a youth of mowing lawns, clearing driveways and selling newspaper subscriptions, Duncan's first serious business venture (at 14) was a golf course stand he set up selling refreshments and used golf balls outside the fence at the 9th hole. He also became the manager of a convenience store when he was only 18, in Carleton Place, Ontario.

Duncan moved to Calgary in 1978, where he partnered with a childhood friend in a small construction company. He worked as a carpenter and continued with his outdoor adventures in the back country. Later he attended SAIT for Civil Engineering and went to the La Ronge area and Key Lake Uranium mine as a surveyor, then on to Quality Control at various construction works. After various

jobs in the field of construction he was keen to see the north and so answered an ad in the Globe and Mail for a Building Inspector in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut in 1987.

After a few years with the Housing Corporation he began working for Sanajit Construction as a Project Manager and eventually bought in to the company as part owner. After Sanajit, he sought warmer climates in Hay River, Northwest Territories. In 1995 he bought a small trailer in Hay River and created Arcan Construction Ltd. Duncan began bidding on small housing and roofing jobs, took a few chances and found continued success over the years. His first big commercial jobs were in Fort Smith with school renovations and Arcan Construction eventually became the largest northern owned commercial construction company in the Territories. Sister company Sanaqatiit Construction Ltd. was started in Nunavut in 2011. In 2010 Duncan took on partners with an aim to retire and exit the stressful field of commercial Construction. This transition was complete in February of 2020.

A principal philosophy of Duncan's was to give back to the community. He hired and trained local workers in smaller communities and donated to many causes and fundraisers. In many communities, most of Arcan's work crews were local residents - long before contract requirements mandated this in later years. Duncan also supported youth programs and provided a home for the Hay River SPCA at his Hay River Arcan site. Heated dog houses and dog and puppy pens were interspersed between piles of lumber and roofing materials. More than a few feral cats and kittens were acclimatized to humans in the Arcan office and

*That man is a success-
Who has lived well,
laughed often and loved much;
Who has gained the respect of
intelligent men
and the love of children;
Who has filled his niche
and accomplished his task;
Who leaves the world better
than he found it;
Who has never lacked
appreciation of earth's beauty
or failed to express it;
Who looked for the best in
others
and gave the best he had.
(Bessie Anderson Stanley)*

there are many (!) stories of dogs and cats brought through Duncan and Pamela's home as well. Duncan remained, ever patient, rolling his eyes with each new addition.

Thank you to Bradford Cooke for your invaluable help and support, we are deeply grateful. Thank you to Joanne-Stone Greene, Jeff Greene and Robert Taylor for getting Duncan and Pamela home. Thank you to Jeanie and Mike Hughes (DVM) and Tiarella Hanna for caring so kindly and generously for the animals so Pamela could focus on Duncan. Thank you to Margo Pook and Cheryl Dies for your constant and reliable support. Thank you to all who have offered help and care throughout these months and at the end. We will have a celebration of Duncan's life at a future time where his ashes will be scattered on the lake that he loved the most.

Memorial donations may be made to favoured charities in lieu of flowers. Please feel free to reach out with stories for the family or post on Memories of Duncan Dean Cooke on facebook. A future online memorial will be announced.