

RICI LAKE

**Our friend Rici Lake died
in Peru on February 19, 2023.**



Rici was born in 1955 to Joan Papert and Michael Liknaitzky, who were from South Africa. At the age of 14, Rici worked as a journalist for the Edmonton Journal and then attended the University of Alberta to study Systems Engineering, inspired by his uncle Seymour Papert, a renowned scientist. He finished school early and attended MIT at the age of 15 to study linguistics with Noam Chomsky. After protesting the Vietnam War, he had to leave the US, and later made his way to the North, first working at the Slave River Journal in Fort Smith, and then for Northern News Services, and later the Press Independent, in Yellowknife. Later, he worked for the GNWT helping to set up the Internet in northern communities. In the late 1990s, Rici left to work for Oxfam in Oxford, and then in Africa, and then in Peru in 1998. He met his wife, Liana Cisneros, with whom he founded the Alturas International Music Festival. In 2007, he worked for Google in Switzerland, and returned to Peru four years later, spending the rest of his life there.

During his time in Yellowknife, Rici was a strong supporter of progressive politics and social justice, serving as a board member with AIDS Yellowknife, and an active member of the NDP. For many, Rici was the first vegetarian they met in the 1980s, and his love of nature, music, and other cultures, his generosity, his humility, and his brilliance, defined him. He was a polymath, an activist, a poet, a computer scientist, and a linguist who took joy from so much in Yellowknife – on his boat, with his cat, at Ceilidhs, playing bridge, writing, voraciously reading, talking and listening deeply to his friends, and being a dedicated “raven socialist” – Rici never saw borders or boundaries, just possibilities for action.