

Eugene Donald Roach

December 5th, 1976 - July 25th, 2022



On July 25th, 2022 Eugene passed away peacefully; nearly four years after receiving a diagnosis for stage 4 metastasized lung cancer.

Eugene was born in St John, New Brunswick in 1976 to Linda Roach. During his formative years he was surrounded by the love and strength of his "extra" family Sylvain and Mildred Vautour and their children, who treated Eugene like instant family and often refer to him as their little brother. Soon after, Linda met Isidore and he joined the family, being Eugene's role model, father and friend.

Raised in the Acadian village of St Louis de Kent, he helped out his uncles in the summer on their lobster fishing boats. From a young age, Eugene was obsessed with sports. Thanks to his godfather and grandfather he acquired a love for hockey and baseball and would spend hours outside playing catch. He loved it when he could travel outside of New Brunswick and discover new places.

Upon graduation from the Université de Moncton, Eugene traveled north to Mayo, Yukon to start his teaching career. He left the Maritimes with lessons in hand from his mentor Aldeo Richard and embarked on a dream of fishing, biking and skiing. After three years, he transferred to Ecole St Joseph School in Yellowknife, to teach physical education. Over the next 18 years, many special students crossed his path, and he strived to ensure they learned valuable life lessons through sports.

It is in Yellowknife that he met the love of his life, Cynthia and soon encompassed a life with her. Through their marriage, Eugene became a father to Courtney and took this role very seriously. As a family they could be found traveling during school holidays (as long as the trips revolved around food, sports, Acadian culture or music), or planning their next Northern adventure over a board game at the kitchen table.

As the winters were long in the North, Eugene had many hobbies, one of which was music. Many music parties were hosted in the Roach house, with friendships formed through the strum of a guitar. Thanks to the support of the music scene in Yellowknife, Eugene fulfilled a lifelong dream of recording two albums with other talented musicians, allowing the world a glimpse into the depths of this quiet man.

Eugene liked to spend as much time outside as possible, whether that be hunting, or on the water in his boat. Great Slave Lake was his sanctuary and exploring it with Cynthia and Courtney became a summertime ritual. Many shore lunches and camping trips were shared, and Burnt Island Man Spas always held a special place in his heart.

As a coach, player, organizer and occasional cheerleader, Eugene became involved in all aspects of the sporting community in Yellowknife. His passion for hockey led him to be a proud member of the WIMP Hockey Organization and he was known by his teammates for a great 'floppy fish' save.

As Eugene's disease progressed, he left the North with Cynthia and headed to Vancouver Island. The lure of year round fishing, easier climates, and their daughter and son-in-law down the road, made Sooke, British Columbia the perfect spot to be.

Eugene lived each day to the fullest, despite his diagnosis, and ignored any suggested timelines or statistics. He lived life large, but focused on the small things, drawing some of his strength from a special student who shared this understanding deeply. Seeking joy daily, he reminded us all that he, not the cancer, was in control.

Eugene leaves behind to cherish his memory his loving wife Cynthia, his daughter Courtney, son-in-law Lionel, parents Linda and Isidore, parents-in-law Donna and Ray, step-brothers Eric (Trina) and Robert, step-sister Micheline (Simon), brother-in-law Scott, nieces Alaria (Massimo) and Mara, nephew Spencer, godparents Lucille and Marven, his beloved Bear and many special friends, aunts, uncles, cousins and students too numerous to name.

Eugene was predeceased by his special little buddy Jonas, Grandmothers Mildred, Jeaninne, and Aurore, Grandfathers Sylvan, Eloi and Oscar, and sister-in-law Janet.

Eugene's family gives thanks to the amazing medical team that spanned from Yellowknife to Edmonton to Victoria. They left no stone unturned, listened to his wishes, believed in his strength, and supported him along his journey.

At Eugene's request, a cremation has taken place and the family will gather to spread his ashes at a later date. A Celebration of Life will be held for Eugene on Saturday, September 3rd, 2022 at 1:00pm at the Weledeh/Ecole St Patricks gym in Yellowknife, NT.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to the Yellowknife Community Foundation for a scholarship program in Eugene's memory. The following link has been provided.
https://www.ykcf.ca/home/get-involved/?fbclid=IwAR37oG001M-3eo_ZgSndGcTswsoVly6VCVQyDKNXJtCwN7YMIMiJZg_9b_c#donate