

# TONY VÁNĚ

August 9, 1946 - March 22, 2023



After a shocking and recent diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, the family of Tony Váně announces his passing. Fortunately, Tony was able to die peacefully at home with family gathered around to offer comfort and solace during his final days. Larger than life, Tony seemed invincible.

Tony was a force: tall, solid of build, strong of voice (and opinions), and commanding of character. Born in Kladno, Czech Republic during the unstable times of Soviet-era repression, Tony formed solid principles of character prior to his escape to England in 1969: reliable work ethic, integrity in relationships, and a no-nonsense approach to family, business, and friendships. A person's word for Tony was one's bond; loyalty above all else was a core value. He hid his big heart behind his gruff demeanor and was always quick to jump in and assist people in need.

When Tony would dream of fleeing his country, he wasn't drawn to large urban centers. Having been exposed to the writing of Jack London, he felt called by the wilds of Northern Canada. He was enchanted by the thought of wide-open landscapes, and abundant hunting and fishing; space to truly exercise one's freedom. Arriving in Canada after living in England for three years he felt his dream had come true when he landed in Canada's North in 1973.

He settled in Yellowknife, NWT and met Mary, who had come North from Nova Scotia to teach at St. Pat's. Together, they built a beautiful family home on the shores of Great Slave Lake. Tony first worked as a commercial painter and later purchased Yellowknife Motors, which he ran for 29 years with partner Otto Stabel. Despite his lack of formal education in the Czech Republic, Tony made use of the education opportunities available in Canada; he was well-read and a lifelong learner. He worked hard and made tremendous sacrifices to ensure his children understood the importance of education.

Tony regularly opened his home as a place of rest and refuge for recent refugees, total strangers, as well as friends and family from far and wide. He was a generous gift giver and shared what he had. A welcoming host, he spent many summer evenings entertaining loved ones on his deck overlooking Back Bay. As passionate outdoorsmen, Tony and Otto purchased and operated Katimavik Lodge for many years. He enjoyed nothing more than traveling to hunt and fish with loved ones. His basement was always full of wild game, and his garden full of kohlrabi.

Tony embraced life, family and was always game to travel. During cold northern winters, he and Mary would often embark on trips to warmer climates. In line with his great passion for hunting, Tony undertook epic hunting journeys in Czech Republic, Argentina, and throughout the North. Tony and Mary raised their children in Yellowknife and were pillars of the community for nearly 50 years. Tony leaves behind four children: Eva, Moira, Anthony and Jennifer and five grandchildren: Matej and Filip (Eva), Angus and Freya (Moira), and Barrett (Jennifer), and one great-grandchild: Matyáš.

His illness and passing are difficult to accept and while time may bring a measure of healing, the memories of Tony will remain constant companions. Tony was adamant that no one feel sorry for him because all of his dreams had come true. Tony leaves many to mourn and to cherish his memory. A service to celebrate his life will be held at St. Patrick's Church at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 1st. In lieu of flowers, donations will be gratefully accepted by Inclusion NWT (formerly Abe Miller Center) in Yellowknife, NWT.

Lastly, the family would like to thank everyone in palliative home care who supported Tony and his family.