



REMEMBERING
Gary Clifford Yamasaki
June 13, 1956 - February 19, 2022



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On Saturday, February 19, Gary Yamasaki had been in the Abbotsford hospital for three

weeks dealing with complications related to his cancer. By then he was feeling well enough to enjoy the wonton soup he had asked for, approved by his doctor and brought

by his wife, and he explained curling to her as they watched the Olympics together. Yet

suddenly he was overcome, and just a few hours later with his wife at his side, he took

his last breath and crossed the threshold from this life to the next.

People are like a breath;

their lives are like passing shadows.

LORD, tear open the sky and come down.

Psalm 144:4-5 (NCV)

Gary was born in Vancouver, B.C., played many sports in his childhood and youth, was

baptized into the church, met and married his high school sweetheart, graduated from

law school and passed the bar, managed a running shoe store, earned a Master of

Divinity and a Ph.D. in biblical studies. He taught at a Bible school for over twenty-five

years, then taught and supervised grad students at a Christian university. His research

specialty was perspective criticism, and his latest project was developing an animated

video series to teach New Testament Greek.

Gary was an innovative teacher and scholar, who met hardship with endurance and faith in God, and was unfailingly kind to others even as he went through hospitalizations

and chemotherapy. He loved mentoring and encouraging others, watching and analyzing movies, running for fitness and even moreso for the sense of freedom it gave

him, tending daily to his fantasy hockey pool, and being "at home with just us two."

Gary leaves behind his brothers, Brian (Kathy) and Warren (Sheri), and other extended

family members and friends, missed by them and by many, especially by his wife and

best friend, April. The positive thoughts and prayers of many within and beyond the church community and the expressions of care from family, friends, church members,

health care workers, and even strangers have been a key part of this journey. In deep

grief and deep gratitude, thanks be to God.

In lieu of a memorial service, please celebrate Gary's life by giving blood, encouraging a

health care worker, or doing some other deliberate act of kindness. As well, please leave a memory or tribute by using the "send condolence" link. Donations in his memory

gratefully received by a charity of your choice.

Love the Lord your God

with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.

Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Matthew 22:37, 39 (NCV)

In Memory, from Gary's brother, Brian

I recollect Gary's first childhood accident, since I was responsible for babysitting. We

were playing and crawling on a wooden telephone pole, when the pole moved and pinned Gary's leg underneath. Fortunately he was rescued by the neighbours, his leg

was fine, and I got another chance to babysit my little brother. Gary's love for hockey

stats started at a very young age as we fought over the sports section of the Sun newspaper. He kept stats of every goal, assist, and penalty minute of each player on a

daily basis. His love for the Montreal Canadiens even led him to clip "Go Habs Go" in

our front hedge. As a runner, Gary was very fast, and he chose what I thought was the

hardest race of all, the 800 meters. He challenged himself further when he went on to

complete the Chicago Marathon. Gary loved mentoring. This even included teaching

elementary school students about track on his days off from managing the running shoe

store. His accomplishments were endless. I will always remember the support and encouragement he provided to me when I entered my first Sun Run and every run thereafter. I am so thankful for the closeness I felt we shared in this past year.

In Memory, from Gary's brother, Warren

I remember Gary doing well at school since all his past teachers had high expectations

of me (no pressure), being a meticulous statistician with his stacks of Hockey News and

his statistics binders during high school (a pre-cursor to his hockey pool career), and

someone that loved sports. We had fun playing street hockey, he was a very good goal

keeper in juvenile soccer, he played tackle football, played baseball sometimes together

with me on the same team. He was a member of the Vancouver Optimist Club, training

with Olympic medalists Greg Joy and Debbie Brill down in Brockton Oval. He was a great field hockey goalie. He and four of his friends won a game against the senior high

school field hockey team for fun. He also played the trombone for all of high school which was important to our parents, but noisy for the household. He was able to

pick up

an electric guitar and learn Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water" by ear. Hard act to follow both Brian and Gary.

In Memory, from Gary's friend, Chuck (Texas, USA)

Gary was a friend for almost 35 years. I met him in graduate school, where we were the only two who survived the first year. He was as gentle and kind a person as I have ever met. He combined his faith and his scholarship in remarkable ways. He earned a Ph.D. under the world-renowned professor, Dr. Jack Dean Kingsbury. He wrote books, not for tenure, but because he had something to say about how point of view mattered in reading biblical texts. He lived with great passion: as a runner, as a researcher, as a teacher of Greek, as a supporter of April's ministry, as one who memorized the Gospel of Matthew, as a friend. He not only had the Sermon on the Mount memorized, he lived it, non-violently, generously, faithfully. Remarkably, we kept in touch, even though we both lived in the same city for only two years. Our friendship survived and grew. His memory will always be part of my life. Rest in peace, Gary. You will be raised in power.

