



Anton Arthur van der Valk

May 6, 1945 - March 21, 2024

Anton “Ton” Arthur van der Valk, aged 78, passed peacefully on March 21st, 2024, at the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax. Born in Amsterdam on May 6, 1945 – mere days after Canada liberated the Dutch – Ton’s middle name, Arthur, was given to honour the Canadian soldier who assisted in his birth.

Ton’s formative years were spent in the Netherlands, where he enjoyed many hours at the AFC football club and competitive swimming – though far more time was spent socializing with friends at his favourite watering hole, Café Welling. He earned his PhD in Physics from the University of Amsterdam, later conducting research at the Zeeman Laboratorium. A gifted teacher, Ton had a knack for simplifying complex concepts. He could talk about anything and enjoyed slowly meandering through conversations. He never rushed.

Ton taught physics and mathematics until stage IV cancer dealt him an early retirement in his thirties. Determined to see the world, he took every opportunity to travel, hitchhiking across dozens of countries (Bali was his favourite) and collecting memories. He also co-owned a hobby shop in Amsterdam, driven by his fascination with model kits and how they could be transformed into intricate architectural creations. Always seeking to expand his understanding of the world, Ton found solace in the local library. He was an avid reader.

In 1991, while doing research in Antigonish, Ton met his partner, Mary (at a bar, of course). They married in 1993, settling permanently in Halifax. Over the next two decades, Ton faced many health challenges, including SMART syndrome resulting from brain damage caused by radiation therapy. His resilience earned him the endearing nickname “the cat with 9 lives”. No matter what life threw his way, Ton never lost his good nature.

Ton championed by example the importance of education, introspection, and gentleness. He had a deep appreciation for classical music, relished his sunrise coffee (“medium dark roast, black with two sugar, and double-cupped, please!”), and enjoyed delving into a complicated book (most recently, the “Principles and Applications of the General Theory of Relativity”) – preferably with a stroopwafel and a slice of Mary’s homemade marzipan on the side.

Brilliant, kind, and fiercely protective, Ton was a true scientist who looked at life practically. Though he may have been misunderstood at times, he was never judgmental or ill-intentioned. His loving heart, logic, and witty humour made him fearless, even in his final moments. We will miss him dearly.

Ton is survived by his wife of 31 years, Mary Lukeman (formerly Antigonish), and daughter, Alexandra (Halifax); son, Arthur, and granddaughter, Danaë (Netherlands); niece, Eva, and nephew, Marc (Netherlands). He was predeceased by his brother, Peter, whom he missed all his life.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the many healthcare professionals involved in Ton’s care over the years, particularly the Emergency Department and 6.4 Coronary Care ICU of the QEII, who were exceptionally attentive and kind.

Donations in Ton’s memory can be made to the Maritime Brain Tissue Bank. A

celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Tribute Wall

SP

“ We will remember his kind smile, his great disposition for a nice chat, he loved to seat out in the porch under the sunshine. Worm wishes to Mary and Alex from Pedro and Sandra

sandra and pedro - April 07, 2024 at 07:16 AM

AK

“ I always enjoyed when Ton would take his walk and stop for a chat! He was truly a sweet, gentle soul. My heart breaks for you both Mary and Alex, my most sincere condolences.

Alison Kennedy - April 06, 2024 at 08:38 PM

MJ

“ Dear Mary & Alexandra, my heart goes out to you at this difficult time.

Mary Farrell Jewers - April 06, 2024 at 08:11 PM

VV

“ Vins Vrushali Vrithi and Veda purchased the Sweet Tranquility Basket for the family of Anton Arthur van der Valk.



Vins Vrushali Vrithi and Veda - April 06, 2024 at 08:09 PM