



Christopher Michael Bell

July 27, 1966 - May 15, 2024

Christopher M Bell

It is with great sorrow that we announce the death of Dr. Christopher Michael Bell. Chris passed away on 15 May 2024, surrounded by loved ones after a brief, but aggressive, Blitzkrieg-style attack of cancer.

Chris was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on 27 July 1966 to parents Bonnita Anne (Barclay) Bell and Peter Alvin Bell. He spent most of his youth in Calgary, Alberta. Chris is survived by his parents, Bonnie and Peter, his sons Alex W. and Matthew A. Bell, sister Erinn Sehn (Chad), nephew Garyth Sehn, and his loving partner Deanna Foster.

Chris was a brilliant scholar. He completed his BA Honours at the University of Calgary, his MA War Studies at the King's College in London, and his PhD at the University of Calgary. His work took him from where he grew up in Calgary to where he finally settled in Halifax to work at Dalhousie University in 2003.

As a member of the history department, he made an incredible impression on students for 20 years, who have shared their immense joy from his classes. A popular, award-winning teacher, he loved teaching and mentoring students. He was a fierce supporter of the importance of academic integrity, and nurtured that within his students. Students appreciated his witty sense of

humour that always made the material interesting.

His passion for history was evident with every lecture in the classroom, every presentation at a conference, every meticulous footnote. Along with scholarly works, he loved a good murder mystery. His love of books started from childhood, where he was known to chastise his mother for bending the spines of books. Collecting books was a lifelong passion that he shared with all who knew him. He was the author and editor of several books, including his most recent book on Churchill and the Dardanelles.

Chris loved to travel, which he often did with his partner Deanna. She was his best friend, his true love of many years, and he disheartened that they won't have more adventures to share. From local bookstores to Europe, he was eager to journey near or far. He always found something to enjoy about every city he visited.

Chris would like to acknowledge how grateful he is for the overwhelming support and kindness he has received over these last few weeks. Many thanks to his parents, sister Erinn and brother-in-law Chad, for coming to be with him. Thanks to his friends and colleagues from the academic world (including DMO, MS, JF, DC), childhood friends, including Charles and Alvin, and former students. And to the nurses and doctors in the palliative care ward, which he described as an "oasis of empathy."

An inspiring mentor, a supportive friend, brilliant scholar, a loving partner, son and father, Chris was taken from us much too soon. He will be forever missed.

"Do not grieve for me too much. Death is only an incident, and not the most important which happens to us in this state of being. Look forward, feel free, rejoice in life." - Winston Churchill, 1915.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to a cancer fund. A memorial of life will be organized in the fall at Dalhousie University. Messages of support for his family and the sharing of memories can be passed on to Deanna Foster at deanna.foster@dal.ca

Tribute Wall



“ I met Chris when I was in high school and he was in his first year of undergraduate studies at the University of Calgary. He tutored me in math among other things. We used to go antiquarian book shopping all the time. His favourite bookshop in Calgary was Aquila Books, which carried an impressive collection of beautiful, rare history books. I learned a lot from Chris and I am really saddened to see his life cut so short. He was clearly loved by many. Thank you so much, Deanna Foster, for being there by his side until the end and for bringing him so much happiness in the last years of his life. I offer my deepest condolences to his parents, Bonnie and Peter Bell, and his sister Erinn. You raised a wonderful person who touched so many lives!

Tonya Callaghan - October 28, 2024 at 01:31 PM

SP

“ I'm a history student at Dalhousie, Dr Bell is my favourite professor. I learned a lot from him and his guidance has helped me become a better student. I always looked forward to his classes, my favourite parts were his PowerPoint animations on different military techniques with arrows and sound effects, always made me laugh. Sending love to his family and close ones.

Sophie P - October 04, 2024 at 06:35 PM

DS

“ Chris and his wife befriended me in 1999 when we both were at the Naval War College in Newport, RI. I enjoyed a number of wonderful dinners at their house over the year I was there. Chris and I also shared a common interest in history and naval matters and I was always happy to see him at conferences. His far, far too soon passing is great loss. Donald Stoker

Donald Stoker - July 23, 2024 at 03:27 PM

BM

“ I will always be grateful for our friendship. I met Chris through Deanna. I will always cherish and miss our small gatherings where laughs were aplenty. Chris was witty, charming, and funny. His accomplishments were many, yet he remained humble. Chris made a difference in the lives of everyone he met, whether it be in the classroom or not. My condolences to everyone who knew Chris, because to know him is to love him. My heart goes out to his family and friends, and to the love of his life, and his soulmate, Deanna.

Betty McEachern - June 17, 2024 at 12:05 PM

TK

“ Dr. Bell's book *Churchill and the Dardanelles* is one of my all-time favorites. He was an excellent historian. My sympathy to his family.
Tom Kirchner
Wheeling IL

Tom Kirchner - June 12, 2024 at 10:03 PM

PJ

“ I have not met Chris, but we are connected. Deanna, the love of his life, exercised with me and recently sent me a photo of her and Chris. She working out beside his bedside in the hospital, and he smiling proudly at her. I wish I knew Chris and shared a memory with him. His smile reminds me of a mischievous child who knows he shouldn't, but he does so anyway... and I adore those types of people.

To Deanna and Chris' family, I send you all a heartfelt hug during this difficult time. And as we bid farewell to Chris, let us raise our glasses in celebration of his life.

- PJ

PJ - May 24, 2024 at 08:40 PM

GC

“ Chris contacted me around 2009 when he discovered we shared similar historical interests and that we were then writing books on the Dardanelles. We maintained a regular email correspondence from that point on and I had the pleasure to meet him twice when he visited Australia. Not only was he an outstanding historian, he was a true gentleman and a thoroughly nice guy! I will greatly miss our association. I send my condolences and best wished to Chris's family and friends.

Graham Clews

Graham Clews - May 23, 2024 at 09:42 PM

JC

“ So sorry for your loss. My thoughts are with you

Jan Clarke - May 23, 2024 at 08:40 PM

MI

“ Sending sincere condolences.

Michele - May 23, 2024 at 09:07 AM

MG

“ I was really sad to hear about the passing of Dr. Chris Bell. He was an amazing professor and supervisor. Chris cared for each of his students and made an effort to keep in touch with them over the years. He inspired me to pursue further education and a career in history. He will be missed. My thoughts are with his family.

Megan Grey - May 21, 2024 at 05:52 PM

CN

“ Please accept my deepest condolences. Chris was a delightful colleague, a gifted historian, and a friend. I hope that his family knows how deeply he touched the hearts and minds of many, many students. May you all treasure your memories of him. I know I will.

Cynthia Neville - May 21, 2024 at 12:50 PM

JC

“ So sorry for your loss. You are in my thoughts.

Jean Cuff - May 21, 2024 at 11:22 AM

GD

“ Very to hear of Dr. Bell's passing, my sincere condolences to his family.

Graham Denman - May 21, 2024 at 08:49 AM

JA

“ I am so sorry to hear of Chris' sudden illness and death--sending my deepest condolences to his family.

Jennifer Andrews - May 21, 2024 at 08:09 AM

NB

“ Such devastating news! Our sincere condolences to you all.

Nicky Brown-Jobe - May 21, 2024 at 01:09 AM

PM

“ I am so sorry to hear this sad news. Thinking of you all

Pat Mccutcheon - May 20, 2024 at 04:17 PM

RB

“ I am so sorry for your loss. I know words aren't much help, but please know I am thinking of you all.

Sincerely,
Rachel Brown

Rachel Brown - May 19, 2024 at 11:32 PM

JC

“ So sorry for your loss. Jill and Dave Cressy

Jill Cressy - May 18, 2024 at 10:36 AM