



Daniel Willett Peterson

January 11, 1947 - April 4, 2023

Despite being a self-described ‘young Swedish boy’, and a ‘spring chicken’ Daniel Willett Peterson, 76, died on April 4, 2023 after several lung cancer-related strokes. Dan grew up in Wisconsin, the oldest child of Irving and Mannette Peterson. He walked to school uphill both ways in driving snow, after which he would warm up with a hot bowl of oxtail soup or liver and onions. After attending the University of Wisconsin for a couple of years, he transferred to Colorado State University and eventually (between parties) earned a BS degree in Wildlife Biology.

Several years later he met Marsha, a fellow mid-westerer. They wed in 1978 and later had 2 girls. Dan worked for several local pipeline construction companies before becoming an Inspector in the Engineering Department of the City of Fort Collins. He also earned his teaching certificate in biology, as he had always enjoyed teaching young people, and subbed in junior high and high schools. He retired from the city with enthusiasm and kept busy with an array of hobbies.

As true life-long learner, Dan became fluent in Spanish, traveling many times to non-touristy areas of Mexico, Belize, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Peru. He and Marsha even lived in Costa Rica for several months exploring the natural wonders, enjoying the food and interacting with the locals.

His sanctuary for many years was the in the basement where he developed his own film, played around on his computer, looked at hidden life under the microscope, conducted kid-friendly chemistry experiments and where he kept fascinating artifacts of all kinds. At various points in his life, he took up skiing, ice skating, fishing and fly tying, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, camping, painting, photography, and wood carving. Bird watching was one of his favorite ways to relax in nature and he always kept a pair of binoculars in the car just in case. By bringing his young daughters along on outdoor adventures, letting them catch and keep snakes, turtles, frogs and fish, he passed on a fascination with animals and respect for the natural world.

Another long-time passion was music. Dan was a self-taught guitar player for decades before joining a local guitar circle, but here he was introduced to new genres, artists, equipment and techniques. Within the circle, he honed his musical skills and forged strong friendships. With these friends he played small gigs around northern Colorado, figured out the technology to record his own CDs, and he and Marsha hosted an annual backyard 'Guitar-B-Q'. He enjoyed some Spanish genres, blues, old country and western, classic rock and folk.

Dan meticulously organized and labeled everything, and reused objects, giving them a new purpose. Lists were to be written on a piece of paper "folded neatly in half". If you ever needed to borrow something, he knew right where it was. This will be particularly helpful for when we go through his things – thanks, dad!

He is preceded in death by his mother, father and sister, Marilyn. He is survived by another sister, Alexis Peterson of Milwaukee, WI, Marsha, his wife of 45yrs, daughter Laura (Aaron Novacek), and grandson, Everest, of Fort Collins, CO and daughter Cassie (Jeff Wright) and grandson, Wilder, of Boise, ID, and a grouchy old dog, Ernie. Dan's array of interests and the focus to

pursue them was truly admirable and enviable. There are many things that Dan taught his daughters. Among them: work ethic, integrity, and self-reliance. They will be passed on to his grandsons, as well as his many sayings, made up words and mixed-up nursery rhymes.

According to Dan's wishes, no funeral services will be held, and his ashes will be scattered in a favorite place. Feel welcome to share your memories of Dan here, and in lieu of flowers, a donation may be made in his name to the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program at rmrp.org/donate/. Dan wasn't a religious man, so don't wait to see him in heaven. Instead, find him here on Earth: in the glimmer of a mountain stream, in the song of a meadowlark, or in wind moving through the trees.

Tribute Wall



“ 14 files added to the album Memories Album



Bohlender Funeral Chapel - April 06, 2023 at 11:45 AM

PM

Dear Marsha, Laura, Cassis and the extended Family. I knew Dan from the song circle he and I attended. It was always such a delight to see Dan. He was an excellent guitar player and his song selections were always top notch and extremely enjoyable. The unique thing about Dan in our song circle was his homemade laptop percussion set up. It had a washboard, bells various tin cans of various sizes for different sounds effects and he used a combination of sticks and brushes to enhance the performance of other musicians playing. We will miss him very much. Next time I am out for a walk outdoors and playing music I will remember fond memories of Dan. His musical spirit will live on in our song circle. Sincerely, Paul Matonis

Paul T Matonis - April 06, 2023 at 11:02 PM

AP

Danny was my big brother. He was very proactive in certain ways. I admired and respected him. He could also be a pain in the ass

Alexis peterson - April 07, 2023 at 06:51 AM

NM

I got to meet Dan and his Kinay as a young girl when I came to Fort Collins to visit to Tim and Cathy Mulcahy, my sister and brother-in-law. Dan and Tim were roommates before Cathy and Tim were married. Dann was in their wedding. When I was I seen your at Fort Collins high school, Dan took my senior class picture. Photography was his hobby and he even made some of his own filters to add an artistic and draumatic effect. I still have all those pictures. I always looked forward to seeing him when he'd stop by. Last time I saw down he had his guitar and was singing at Cathy's home. A time I will never forget. Rest in peace, Dan and say hi to Tim for me.

Noelle Maestas - April 07, 2023 at 10:00 PM

CM

I and a bevy of local birding friends got to know Dan through birds and Spanish. He joined our Christmas Bird Count adventures in Janos, Chihuahua, MX, back in the mid-1990s to conduct bird surveys in an area of the largest complex of black-tailed prairie dogs left on earth. Our goal was to improve the knowledge of bird species that occur there in winter and help our Mexican wildlife biologist colleagues to convince the Mexican government that it should create a crucial biosphere reserve there. That mission has been accomplished, thanks in part to Dan's help on our surveys. It was wonderful of him to participate. He also offered to teach some of us (among those who went to Janos) conversational Spanish so that we could communicate with folks in Mexico in their own language. So, we had a number of classes led by Dan, and they inspired me to keep learning Spanish for the rest of my life. Despite his quiet, unassuming way, his kindness and generosity of heart were very apparent, but he didn't really reveal much about himself, so I had no idea how many other interests and accomplishments he had until mutual friends alerted me about his passing and I read the wonderful obituary about him here. It seems he was a true renaissance man... To Marsha and the rest of Dan's family, I am so sorry for your loss. I hope you all find peace and solace as you journey through and always keep close by your most cherished memories of Dan.

Cynthia Melcher - April 15, 2023 at 11:08 PM