



GERARD VELDHOVEN

— 04-Dec-1940 - 21-Aug-2022 —

Obituary Overview

In Loving Memory of Gerard

Gerard Veldhoven, 81, passed away Sunday August 21, 2022 at The Mira Nursing Home in Truro, NS.

This is it folks!

Well, this has been a journey I will not soon forget. Although, let's be realistic—it has ended for me personally, however I leave this life knowing my story and accomplishments have inspired others to carry on, to be the difference they wish to see and have the freedom to be who they are.

I was born into this world December 4, 1940 in Bilthoven, The Netherlands amid the horrors of World War 2. The second son of Johannes Hendrikus Veldhoven and Johanna Pieterella Veldhoven-van Kuijk. I was a blond-haired, blue-eyed, handsome kid who was soon joined by two more brothers. After the war in 1954, the decision was made to immigrate to Canada, a place we knew little about. Once settled, we received an education, learned the English language, and became accustomed to life in Canada, our new home.

As life went on, I married a wonderful woman Louise Campbell, became a proud father and eventually an Opa to two beautiful grandchildren. I identified as a gay man in an era of unacceptance but soon came out. A divorce followed, and I began the early stages of my activism for the LGBTQ+ community.

In 1975, I met my future husband, Norman Carter while teaching at the Interprovincial School for the Deaf in Amherst. Norman and I opened Carvel Upholstery and Draperies in Amherst, servicing customers until Norman died and I closed shop in January, 2010. We were officially the first same-sex male couple in Nova Scotia to be legally married and we held a public ceremony with TV cameras, newspapers and other media documenting the occasion in Amherst, Nova Scotia, on October 16, 2004.

Life has been a blast in many ways, and I'm satisfied that my life has been so productive. First and foremost my family has been the very core of my journey and happiness. I salute all my friends who stood by me when I needed assistance and those who face challenges in society because of persecution from right-wing religious views and ignorance. I admire those who embraced these challenges and stepped up to make a difference. They did well!

Highlights of my life include the visits to my family in Toronto, the Annapolis Valley, The Netherlands, and other places in between, these were the joy in my existence. Without doubt, I have lived a life with much to be proud of and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to do what I could to bring attention to the plight of the LGBTQ+ citizens in our society. I was nominated for the Order of Nova Scotia, received accolades from government and other organizations, but as much as I have been humbled and honored by these gestures, my goal was only to fight for equal rights, opportunity, marriage, and dignity. As a freelance columnist, I would like to thank Wayves Magazine, for publishing the many articles I have written and Transcontinental and Saltwire Network for running my weekly column "Refocus" allowing a platform for my activism. As a parent, grandparent, husband, former teacher, business owner, columnist, author, speaker and LGBTQ+ community leader my life was enriched.

I was pre-deceased by my parents and youngest brother Nicolaas. Survived by my son, Mark Andrew, his wife Evelyn, my grandchildren, Mia and Callan and my other son Christopher Alexander of Toronto. Also surviving are my brothers, Aart, (Ginny), John (pre-deceased by Marilyn) and sister-in-law Eileen Veldhoven, all of Annapolis Valley and my many nieces, nephews and cousins. My extended family; step-daughters, Cindy MacKillop (Kip), Alberta, Laurel Carter, (Andrew) Barronsfield, NS; step grandchildren, Tony White, Alberta; Ashley Turner, (John), my step great granddaughter, Hannah Elizabeth, step great grandson, Grayson John of Truro and Shannon Carter of Edmonton.

Very special thanks to my best friend, roommate and confidant, John Carter, who took on this crazy guy who constantly jarred the neighbors in our apartment complex. A brave act indeed!

I express love and thanks to all who assisted me at The Willow, Palliative and Continuing Care, and my supporters at the Town of New Glasgow. I wish to thank all who assisted me in Continuing and Palliative Care in New Glasgow and Truro, and to the exceptional care I received at the Mira Nursing Home where the staff were amazing, always made me feel at home and well looked after with a laugh, smile and a "Hello Papa"! Special thanks also to Dr. Webster.

And so it was. The finality of one's existence is normal and should be taken as a light that shone brightly, then dimmed then went out. I would direct everyone to my book, entitled "A Passion for Equality, My Personal Journey", available to buy on-line at Blurb.ca which I view as a finish to a life well-lived!

I have been cremated. My ashes will be divided and half will be buried with my late husband in the St. Charles-Nativity Cemetery in Amherst. The other half will be spread in Den en Rust Cemetery in my birthplace of Bilthoven, the Netherlands, by my cousins, Anke van Vliet and Dr. Frank de Gruijl. There will be no funeral service or visitation at my request, but a celebration of life that will highlight my enjoyable journey will take place in New Glasgow at a date to be determined this September and a time and venue will be announced. I invite you all to come and enjoy my final party!

I would like to close with a quote from my book:
"We hear the cries of those in need of love;
commit your time and energy for positive
change. Then, and only then, the tears will
disappear and our society will hopefully
realize that love conquers hate."

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation or the Nova Scotia Rainbow Senior Archives.

Online condolences and sharing of memories can be forwarded to the family via: www.campbellsamherst.ca or by visiting the funeral home Facebook page.

Condolences from family and friends



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