

Published on December 2, 2021

Gordon BENNETT – Obituary

BENNETT, Gordon Hugh
April 14, 1946 - November 2, 2021

Cherished husband, partner and best friend of Katherine Anne Kimberley for over fifty years. Predeceased by his much-loved parents, Glenn Gordon Bennett and Pauline Claire nee Sainthill.

Born in Ottawa, Gordon grew up in Sherbrooke, in Quebec's Eastern Townships, a place and region for which he held many fond memories. He obtained a B.A. honours degree (History and Political Science) from Bishop's University, winning the Department of History Prize in his graduating year, and a Masters degree in history (with distinction) from the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton.

Gordon moved to Ottawa in 1969 after accepting a position with Canada's National Historic Sites program, where he worked until his retirement. Early in his career he produced a history of Yukon transportation to support the restoration of national historic sites in Dawson City. In 2002 he was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee medal for his contributions to Canada's historic places. He was one of the great heritage policy thinkers of his generation.

For over 35 years he worked as an historian and senior cultural heritage advisor. Gordon influenced and guided a generation of heritage specialists by pioneering the concept of commemorative integrity for the management of national historic sites, by leading the implementation of the Cultural Resource Management Policy, and by fostering closer relations and support for the 800+ owners of national historic sites across Canada.

In the later part of his career Gordon led the effort to put in place federal legislation to protect historic places in Canada and he worked tirelessly toward this goal even after retirement. This work resulted in the creation of heritage conservation standards and guidelines as well as a national register of historic places.

Gordon's influence on heritage conservation continues to this day. Many of the foundational documents and tools currently used by conservation specialists in Canada are due in part to the work accomplished under Gordon's leadership. Through his insightful analysis, unflagging determination, and passion, his contribution to Canada's heritage conservation field is simply outstanding. His passing constitutes a great loss for heritage in Canada.

Gordon had a strong interest in history, accompanied by a lively interest in the present and the

future. A person of strong opinions, he enjoyed discussion and debate, and he was especially fond of recalling those (admittedly rare) times when someone else's carefully rendered opinion changed his own. Gordon loved being in human landscapes, whether big cities with their diverse neighbourhoods, villages, small towns or the country-side. These places were his resorts, and he enjoyed the genius of their making and elaboration. He was especially grateful that his work enabled him to visit almost every part of Canada. He took great delight in family gatherings in his home and in planning excursions and vacations with family members, including trips to Quebec City and the Charlevoix region, Newfoundland to track down Sainthill roots, Jasper National Park in Alberta, Australia including Tasmania, Ireland, New Zealand and the Rhine and Danube rivers, and he enjoyed trips and cruises with friends.

Gordon will be forever missed by his beloved wife of 50 years, Katherine (Kathy), and by his siblings Susan Hogan (Ray), John Bennett, and Bea Howell (the late Richard). He leaves many nieces and nephews with fond memories of family picnics, holiday gatherings, and shared adventures: Shannon, Amy, Steven, Erin, Megan, Mark, Stefanie, Caedda, Julia, and Angie. He will be missed by his uncle and aunt Herb and Shirley Sainthill and by many cousins. Gordon will also be missed by Katherine's siblings Dennis (Janelle) and Dianne (Neil) as well as by many friends and colleagues. He was a very helpful son-in-law and fun companion to his late in-laws Harry and Bert Kimberley.

At Gordon's request, no funeral service was held. He will be buried at Pinecrest Cemetery in Ottawa in a private family ceremony in the Spring and celebrations of his life and career will be held in the Spring. Donations in memory of Gordon can be made to Heritage Canada or to a charity of your choice.

Guestbook

Our family was deeply saddened to hear of Gordon's passing.

Gordon and Katherine were our former next-door neighbours of almost 25 years. Knowing how much we would miss them after moving away, we said our goodbyes with mixed emotions and reluctance in our hearts.

Gordon was an extraordinary person, considerate and kind in ways unimaginable to most. He regularly did his yard work and had a lush green lawn which we all aspired to - but could never attain. Any home improvement projects we embarked on benefitted immensely from his input and advice. He was a great conversationalist, was well informed, often offered insights, new perspectives and arguments along with witty remarks.

S. WONG AND FAMILY

January 12, 2022

Gordon was a valued colleague and friend of my late husband Doug. I remember well Doug regaling me with tales of projects at Parks Canada with Gordon, and their work travels around Canada. Doug respected him as a mentor and a professional, and regarded him as intelligent, kind and funny. My heartfelt sympathies to you, Katherine, on the loss of your dear soulmate.

GILLIAN SULLIVAN

December 17, 2021

We were surprised and saddened to hear of Gordon's passing. We always enjoyed spending time with you and Gordon in Ottawa and once when you were in Florida visiting family. He will be missed by many. Our sincere condolences.

PAT AND JON WOOD

December 09, 2021

I had not read Gordon's obituary until today after we spoke about him in our National Historic Sites Alliance meeting. Such a great loss. We use the CRM policy and many of the other policy documents in our everyday work. I wish I had had more time with him. Condolences.

ANDREW WALDRON

December 07, 2021

My deepest condolences to Kathy, and to Gordon's extended family. Gordon was a fun loving, enthusiastic friend in my last years of high school in Sherbrooke, Que and at Bishops U. My thoughts are with you

JOANNE MONTY

December 07, 2021

Gordon was a very active member of the Trinite Club in Sherbrooke. He was both reflective and demonstrative and had a wonderful sense of humour. His role on the executive of the club helped to make it both survive and flourish. You will be missed by many.

DAVID HOGG

December 07, 2021

*I was saddened to read of Gordon's passing. I worked for him at Historic Sites for several years and always appreciated having him as my supervisor. His comments and questions on my papers always resulted in their being more to the point and what was wanted by the Board.
My sympathy to Kathy and his family.*

ELIZABETH VINCENT

December 07, 2021