



Mr. Peter Ramsay Nares

April 5, 2016

It is with profound sadness that we share the news that our dear Peter died, on April 5th, 2016, his 66th birthday, from an aggressive form of chronic lymphocytic leukemia. He was surrounded by his loving family during his last hours.

Peter is survived by his devoted partner, Anne, his darling children, Luke (Josée Wilson) and Kelly (Tobias Witteveen), his cherished grandchildren, Felix and Audrey Witteveen, his loving mother, Hazel, and sister, Nancy. Peter also leaves behind his nieces and nephew, brothers and sisters in-law, and many friends.

Peter faced his illness and mortality with courage and honesty. He was truly an inspiration as he welcomed open discussions and full emotional expression regarding both the meaning and the end of life.

Peter moved around a lot as a child and as a young teenager attended Bishop's College School in Sherbrooke, Quebec. Peter received a Bachelor of Arts from Carleton University and later a Bachelor of Social Work from York University. The repressive environment at boarding school and the sixties counterculture framed the narrative for the rest of his life. Social justice was the concept that would catalyze virtually every big decision he made from high school onwards.

Peter's contribution to social services began in 1974 as a child care worker. Frustrated by what he experienced in his efforts to provide optimal care, he became convinced that changes needed to be made systemically. This led to Peter's first position in social policy with the Ontario Social Development Council (OSDC). Peter started Social and Enterprise Development Innovations (SEDI) in 1986, as a division of OSDC, later evolving into an independent, national non-profit in 1995. Under Peter's leadership, the organization was a vehicle for generating, testing and bringing to scale new and effective ideas to reduce poverty by fostering economic independence. Examples of these include the Self-Employment Benefit Program, enabling disadvantaged individuals to start their own businesses; the Registered Disability Savings Bond, helping safeguard funds for those living with disabilities; and the Federal Task Force on Financial Literacy, supporting a truly inclusive economy in which everyone has the opportunity to save for and invest in their dreams. He also worked alongside other national non-profits to pioneer the asset-building and matched savings movement. This work continues to flourish within the organization which was recently re-named Prosper Canada.

In a statement by Charles Coffey, Officer of the Order of Canada, Peter is described as one who embodies "the essence of enlightened compassionate leadership and has given voice to those who have none... He has set a standard of excellence that will be a lasting legacy."

In 2008, Peter was awarded a senior fellowship with Ashoka - a global association of leading social entrepreneurs, in recognition of his vision, commitment and innovative solutions to some of society's most pressing challenges.

Peter also had many interests - gardening, hiking, golfing, hockey, football and

coaching. From a young age he was drawn to the water and loved to be 'near it, on it, or in it'. Fishing for Peter was a treasured time for reflection. Peter believed that it is our responsibility to be informed about the world. He was a voracious reader of many topics from current events to Russian literature. He also loved music, with a special appreciate of rock music. One of his regrets in life was passing on the opportunity to attend Woodstock, thinking it would be be a 'bummer'.

One of Peter's qualities that will be most remembered by all those who knew him was his ability to authentically share himself and encouraging others to do the same. He touched the lives of many and improved the lives of many more. He will be deeply missed.

As an expression of sympathy, please consider making a donation in Peter's name to Prosper Canada (formerly SEDI), the organization founded by Peter (www.prospercanada.org). Memories and photos would welcomed and can be shared at www.aftercare.org/obituaries/Peter-Nares/

Tribute Wall



“ *Beautiful Whisper was purchased for the family of Mr. Peter Ramsay Nares.* ”



April 12, 2016 at 04:55 PM

“ It was with deep sadness that we learned of the passing of our founder, colleague, friend, and mentor, Peter Nares.

Peter will be missed as a dear colleague and friend, but also as a visionary with an unstoppable belief in the desire and capacity of all people to forge a decent life for themselves and their families, and a bottomless desire to give those burdened by poverty the chance to do so.

One of Canada's great social entrepreneurs, Peter worked tirelessly to introduce, refine and scale social innovations that would remove barriers and create real opportunities for Canadians with low incomes to build a brighter financial future.

Begun in 1986 as a program of the Ontario Social Development Council, Peter transformed Prosper Canada (then SEDI) into a standalone non-profit organization in 1995 and spent the next 15 years introducing and helping to drive the development of Canada's micro-enterprise, asset building and financial literacy fields.

The programs he created, developed and inspired have since transformed the lives of countless Canadians. These programs include the Self-Employment Benefit program, which was built into Canada's Employment Insurance system in 1992 and has since enabled approximately 9,000 unemployed Canadians annually to launch successful new businesses and become self-supporting.

Peter's landmark 10-year Learn\$ave project, the largest asset building demonstration project in the world, proved the value of incentivized savings approaches in helping people with low incomes to access post-secondary education and launch successful small businesses. This success inspired the creation of the Canada Learning Bond, a federal program that has since flowed \$607 million into the education savings accounts of 716,714 children living in poverty and encouraged their families to save an additional \$3.16 billion for their futures. Evidence tells us these investments will

double these children's chances of going on to post-secondary education and breaking the cycle of poverty.

Struck by the financial literacy challenges of participants in SEDI's programs, Peter became a tireless champion of financial education, convincing the federal government to launch a national financial literacy task force and establishing a partnership with TD Bank Group that has helped to create and grow a vibrant community financial education field across Canada.

The impact of Peter's work continues to grow today through the many people and organizations he has touched. Informed and inspired by his ideas, they continue to work to level the financial playing field for people with low incomes in Canada – removing obstacles and building pathways to opportunity. Every year, more partners join in this work.

It is sometimes hard to reconcile Peter's extraordinary impact with the man himself. His signature 'west coast' look, quiet charm, and laid back demeanour often belied the passionate determination that drove him, the brilliance of his ideas, and the political and practical acuity that enabled him to move mountains.

In this and all other respects, he was and will remain a quintessentially great Canadian -- a modest man who harboured limitless aspirations for others, who believed in the dignity and capacity of every person, and inspired us to pursue and commit to justice, fairness and generosity in the policies that govern us, the sharing of our resources, and the ways we treat each other.

We have lost a great friend and teacher but his lesson remains to guide us all.

*Liz Mulholland
Prosper Canada*

Liz Mulholland - April 11, 2016 at 01:47 PM

CC

“ *Canada, and the world, has lost one of the great champions of the disadvantaged in our society. He was steadfast in his determination to make a difference and extend a hand up to those in need. Peter had a unique ability to bring together women and men from all walks of life to help advance his agenda of making Canada a better place for all. He was the 'go to person' if one wanted to see and hear true commitment to equality. Peter left us far too soon and will be missed by all. My thoughts and prayers are with his family at this time of great loss. Rest in peace my friend. Charles Coffey*

Charles Coffey - April 11, 2016 at 10:47 AM

LN

Thank you Charles

luke nares - April 15, 2016 at 07:50 PM

JR

“ *6 files added to the tribute wall*



James Riordan - April 10, 2016 at 09:56 AM

EL

“ Luke/Josee and family, Our thoughts and prayers are with you all as you celebrate the life of your Dad Luke.

With love

Moe and Elspeth.

Elspeth Leger - April 10, 2016 at 06:29 AM

TT

“ We have been extremely fortunate to have known Peter. A lot of good times together, with his gentle manner, sense of humor, intelligence, and humanity. Our deepest condolences, Anne , Kelly and Luke and all the family and may his spirit always shine.

“Perhaps they are not stars, but rather openings in heaven where the love of our lost ones pours through and shine down upon us to let us know they are happy.” Eskimo Proverb

Maureen and Ted Thompson & Family

Ted and Maureen Thompson - April 09, 2016 at 12:05 PM

HW

“ It is always heartbreaking when we lose someone so soon in life. The Witteveens adventures with Peter began relatively late when Toby and Kelly brought us all together around 2012. We remember Peter as a wonderful family man with a zest for life despite his health problems. He was thoughtful, caring and at least on the one occasion, not a bad golfer. He had a spectacular garden and a welcoming home. He is the patron of this very loving family and will be deeply missed.

Hank & Jennifer Witteveen & Family

Hank Witteveen - April 09, 2016 at 10:01 AM