

Thomas Priestley Sullivan passed away peacefully poolside with his book and espresso on June 18, 2026, at the age of 75. Tom is lovingly missed by his beloved wife, Dru Sullivan, his children, Hazel Sullivan (spouse Janice Sullivan), Olivia Sullivan (spouse Anthony Stahn), and Ben Sullivan (spouse Priya Yatheesan), his treasured grandchildren, Harley Sullivan, Eli Sullivan, Emily Hofer, and Alexis Hofer, and his sister Suzanne Sullivan. Tom was predeceased by his parents, Thomas and Margaret Sullivan.

Tom was born in Vancouver on April 26, 1951. His love of the natural world was sparked early in life during family trips to Ruth Lake and inspired a PhD and prolific career in zoological research. Tom and Dru met while working as Teaching Assistants at the University of British Columbia and they began a lifelong partnership, marrying in 1976 and embarking on a 50-year shared career in applied ecology, particularly in forestry and agriculture, publishing hundreds of academic articles. Tom's passion led him to teach and inspire Forestry and Agro-Ecology students at UBC and to conduct collaborative research around the world, including research projects in China, New Zealand, and Hawaii. Tom finished his teaching career as Professor Emeritus at UBC in 2015. He continued his research with Dru and son Hazel until his passing. Tom and Dru built a purposeful life grounded in the ways they wanted to advance ecological perspectives, particularly in forestry.

Tom loved to read, explore philosophy and the teachings of Buddha, and share his humble wisdom with loved ones. He imparted grace and dignity to his family which he especially expressed in his abundant love for his grandchildren (aka his "chickabiddies"). Known as "Baba" to his four grandchildren, he was always happy to play a game of beanbag tag or ping pong, spend an afternoon in the pool, read them a pile of books, and practice his skills as a renowned nap whisperer. Always a teacher, Baba was quick to point out the common and Latin names of animals and plants while out on a nature walk with the kids. He would often say that hearing his family laughing and playing together was "music to my ears."

Tom loved a game of football whether it was a backyard family game, the San Francisco 49ers, or a good chat while playing catch. Tom emanated kindness and patience. His fierce love, rare sacred wisdom, and passion for nature will live on through his family. His knee slapping, head-thrown-back belly laughs will be fondly remembered and forever heard echoing around the dinner table.

While we wish we'd had more time with Tom/Dad/Baba, we know he died in a state of contentment with his life.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to a nature conservation charity of your choice.

If you would like to share an anecdote or memory about Tom, please send it to the family at: tps.lovesmice@gmail.com.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

