Dennis Frank Tupman

“We work in the dark – we do what we can – we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion and our passion is our task. The rest is the madness of art.”

-Henry James-

It is with profound sadness we share that Dennis passed away December 9, 2022, in Victoria BC. Born in Victoria on May 19, 1936, Dennis spent his childhood surrounded by music and a love of exploring the Victoria area on his bike. He was cast as the male lead in his high school musical, The Rose of the Danube, where he met and fell in love with his leading lady, Ruth Sones. After completing the teaching program at Provincial Normal School, Dennis married Ruth and they welcomed their first daughter in 1957. They relocated to Kitimat BC, where he established the music program in the burgeoning school district, working tirelessly as a community builder, advocating for, and sharing his love of music with not only his students but the broader citizenry. Two more daughters followed, and life was dedicated to enriching their home with the sounds of music of all genres. During these busy years he also pursued his Bachelor of Education through University of Victoria and his Masters’ Degree at UBC. Not one to shy away from a challenge, Dennis relocated with his family to Vancouver in 1971, taking on the role of District Principal for the Performing Arts for the Vancouver School Board. It was there that Dennis’ advocacy work for the arts really flourished. He fought for adequate arts funding both in the school district and the province, activity that garnered the nickname of Tupman’s Tough Tactics. Throughout his career and continuing into his retirement, he was a passionate ambassador for and proponent of music education, acting as president for the BC Music Educators Association, the Canadian Music Educators Association and the BC Choral Federation. In 2011 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws from the

University of Victoria, an achievement that sits alongside his many other accolades, including the Governor General's Award for Lifetime Arts Leadership. In his retirement to Green Lake in the Cariboo, Dennis continued to be recognized as an active community supporter, and was a regular contributor to both the provincial and national arts communities through interviews and published articles. After returning to Victoria in 2021, Dennis enjoyed reconnecting with friends and places from his past. Variously described as a musician, educator, conductor, director, adjudicator, speaker, writer, philosopher, arts advocate, counsellor, humanitarian, environmentalist and family man, he made it his mission to understand and connect with all who crossed his path. To many, he was simply BBD or Poppy – an exemplary yet humble man, fun-loving and silly, one who was truly loved and will be greatly missed.

Dennis was predeceased by his wife Ruth in 2020, and leaves behind to feel his loss, three daughters, Raechel Tupman, Allison (Brad) Neumann and Denise Tupman, his 6 grandchildren, Matthew (Sayde) Neumann, Megan (Ben Pryputniski) Neumann, Andrea Neumann, Hayley (Aaron) Moldenhauer, Alex (Liam Thwaites) Gipps, and Kenny (Tristina) Gipps, and his 8 great-grandchildren, Aubrey and Grady Moldenhauer, Hunter Archibald, Mara and Thea Neumann, Lilly and Michael Gipps, and Poppy Thwaites.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Shaughnessy Heights United Church, 1550 33rd Ave W, Vancouver BC on Saturday, April 1st at 1 pm.

"Row row row your boat, gently down the stream,

Merrily, merrily, merrily merrily, life is but a dream."

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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