

Richard J. Michaels

It is with a sense of disbelief that we grieve the unexpected passing of Richard J. Michaels, human being extraordinaire! Arriving in Victoria in 1989, Richard began his Canadian adventure and was blessed in 1995 when he met his lifetime partner, Arlene Mar, and their 31-year love affair began. The challenges they initially encountered only strengthened their love and devotion to each other. Richard was the ultimate people connector, a true egalitarian, and true to Dr. King's dream, judged people based on, "The content of their character and not the colour of their skin."

Though a person of colour himself, Richard was actually colour blind. Richard and Arlene hosted numerous dinners and sports viewing events at their Royal Oak home over the years. Their door was always open and there was always a place at the table for whoever showed up, regardless of their background, ethnicity or nationality. These gatherings were an organic expression of authentic multiculturalism, bound by common humanity.

Richard was a lifelong advocate for social justice, always trying to uplift the lives of those he encountered; helping others so they could help themselves. He worked tirelessly on behalf of immigrants, minorities and youth. Richard was passionate about the importance of mentorship and was always open to mentoring anyone who needed him, not only in Victoria, but across Canada and even globally. He was an uber-sports fan (or is it, sports nut?), believing in the transformative power of sports, so in 2017, founded the HarbourCats Foundation, raising funds for disadvantaged youth to be able to participate in baseball, who otherwise couldn't. The Foundation will stand as his legacy.

As an entrepreneur, Richard usually had his iron in many fires. He founded Maccrim Solutions in 2014, serving as its

CEO, providing professional and ethical services in the real estate and land development industry. Believing strongly of the importance of community in peoples' lives, he was active in numerous civic associations, from the BBB to the Rotary Club, the ICA, and the Chamber of Commerce, where he proudly served as its first Chair of the Advancement of Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Richard was a much-desired speaker and made many public presentations over the last 30 years.

Honouring his heritage Richard brought his wisdom and experience to his involvement with both the AACCS-ISSAMBRA and the AHAVI, celebrating their African roots and traditions.

Richards was a life well lived, loving and positive, he was ever the optimist, even holding out everlasting hope for his precious Miami Dolphins to win another Super Bowl – dream on buddy! He was a genuine person of heart, which is why so many felt he was their true brother. Often borrowing from Brother Barack, Richard believed that, “Yes, we can!”

For those of us fortunate enough to know and to love him, the world is a different place today. After he was born, they broke the mould; today we mourn. If souls come in different sizes, Richard's was a Triple X! We've lost a giant.

Richard leaves his beloved Arlene, his cherished children, Darien and Annesiah, along with several grandchildren, siblings, nieces and nephews, as well as the so, so many who called him friend.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the HarbourCats Foundation: victoriaharbourcatsfoundation.org

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens

www.mccallgardens.com

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