Shaun Angelo Zanolla

In Loving Memory

With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Shaun Angelo Zanolla, who left us on May 18, 2025, at Victoria General Hospital in Victoria, BC, after a courageous battle with Neurofibromatosis Type 2. He was 42 years old.

Shaun was born in Orillia, Ontario, to Colleen Janette Duffy and John Thomas Zanolla. Proudly full-blooded Irish on both sides, Shaun carried his heritage with quiet pride. He was predeceased by his beloved mother Colleen, grandparents Margaret and Hector Zanolla, grandpa Allan Edward Duffy, step-grandparents John and Barbara Bennett, mother-in-law Colleen Gurney, foster mother Marg Pagee (Seigler), and his cherished cat, Newt.

Shaun spent his early years in Collingwood and Mississauga before moving to Sooke, BC, with his father, stepmother Joanne Bennett Irving, and brothers Justin and John Bennett. He lived in Victoria for most of his life having made friends from Sooke and Victoria. He met his best friend, future wife and soulmate Carrie in 2001, and later married in 2018. They were inseparable and devoted to each other. The last part of his life was quiet and peaceful. He spent some time travelling with his wife to Montreal and Las Vegas but was happy with a day trip on Vancouver Island to Sidney, Nanaimo or back to Sooke to see the changes. Nothing beat a weekend drive and a stop at Tim Hortons for pumpkin spice or hazelnut iced capps. After further mobility challenges, we were fortunate to be able to rent the Modo wheelchair van for outings. Our most recent trip was to Sidney where we got the usual Timmies and then sat at Tulista Park quietly taking in the peaceful view of the ocean. When travel became more difficult, Shaun would play cribbage, listen to his favourite music. He loved watching Paddington, South Park, Murdoch Mysteries and some

good old Jeopardy to name a few.

Shaun had a deep love for music and dreamed of a career in radio broadcasting. His eclectic CD collection—over 400 strong—spanned genres and generations, from Johnny Cash and Gordon Lightfoot (whom he was thrilled to see live in 2023) to Green Day and Nirvana. He was also an avid collector of Canadian coins and had a keen eye for rare finds. Another of his passions was collecting bear figurines, especially thrifted treasures. His favorite was a print of Aviator Bear, a nod to his dream of becoming a pilot, a dream limited only by his vision.

Shaun had a soft spot for Paddington Bear, finding joy and laughter in the movies and cartoons, especially in his later years. He often spoke of visiting London to see Paddington Station and dreamed of traveling to Australia to see kangaroos and to Seattle to explore its iconic music scene.

Though quiet by nature, Shaun's wit and humor could surprise and delight. He was a thoughtful listener, a trusted confidant, and someone whose words—when spoken—carried weight and wisdom. Even when he couldn't offer a helping hand, he always offered a listening ear and heartfelt advice.

Shaun's unwavering faith in God was a gift passed down from his beloved Grandma Zanolla. Her influence and the cross she gave him became his source of strength during life's most difficult moments. From the very beginning, Shaun faced immense challenges—born prematurely, his survival was uncertain. Doctors even advised his parents not to name him. But they chose the perfect name: Shaun Angelo Zanolla. "Angelo," meaning "angel," symbolized the divine protection and guidance they hoped would surround him.

Shaun defied the odds time and again. He endured three craniotomies and a spinal surgery with remarkable courage. After the spinal operation, his first words were filled with

relief and gratitude—he could move his toes. That moment captured his spirit: resilient, hopeful, and strong. Through every trial, Shaun remained the bravest and strongest among us, a true testament to faith, love, and perseverance.

Though he is no longer with us, his spirit remains ever-present. We can now picture him free from the burdens he once carried, walking and running without limitation, no longer held back by a failing body. His absence leaves a deep void, but his memory will forever live on in the hearts of those who knew and loved him. Shaun's light, his strength, and his kindness will never be forgotten.

He is survived by his devoted wife, Carrie Wicheruk, his loving cat Brody and a wide circle of family, friends and loved ones: his younger brothers Justin and John, father John, step-mom Joanne; uncle Stewart Zanolla, aunt Suzanne Kubasta; sister-in-laws Anna Tate, Erin Beattie and Mikayla Gatzke; brothers-in-law Christopher Tate and Jamie Wicheruk; father-in-law Frederick Bourque; nieces Olivia Bennett and Ryan Beattie; good family friend Martha Studer; grandmother Joan Duffy; cousins Evan and Cameron Zanolla; foster brothers Leonard and Ken Seigler and members from the Zanolla, Thompson and Duffy families.

We would like to extend thanks to the staff at Victoria General Hospital for their care of Shaun in his final days and over the last 14 years since being diagnosed with NF2 including the medical imaging department, VGH 6S Neurosciences Unit and Inpatient Neuro Rehab; as well as his doctors including Dr. Richard Reid (neurosurgeon), Dr. Abraham S. Alexander (BC Cancer Agency radiation-oncologist), Dr. Roy Smardon (long time family doctor), Dr. Parbeen Pathak (neurologist) and Dr. Lukasz Materek (endocrinologist); for all the home support team from the Esquimalt and Westshore Home & Community Care who provided much appreciated home support, respite and a helping hand for Shaun and his wife. Thank you for fighting along side Shaun in his battle against

NF2.

Thank you to all of our family and friends who have graciously supported us through the ups and downs. Shaun loved you all and was tremendously thankful. Thank you also to Lang Cove that provided an accessible home to make it possible for Shaun to stay in home.

Shaun would want to be remembered with a smile—for the laughter shared, the good times cherished, and any wisdom he may have passed along. We encourage you to share your memories and stories of Shaun.

A Celebration of Shaun's Life will take place on Saturday, June 14, 2025, at 10:00 am, in the beautiful Sequoia Centre at McCall Gardens, 4665 Falaise Drive, Victoria, BC, with Cheryl Black as celebrant. A livestream link will be made available to those who cannot attend in person.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens
www.mccallgardens.com

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