

Brian David Murphy (Feb. 18, 1956 – Jan. 30, 2022)

Brian Murphy passed away peacefully on January 30, 2022 in Northfield, MN, after a year-long battle with brain cancer. His beloved children and former wife were next to him, surrounding him with love, care, sorrow, and gratitude.



Brian was born in 1956 in Bar Harbor, Maine, where he grew up as the youngest of seven Murphy siblings. Even as a child he was known as a kind soul, generous and gentle in his interactions with others. From an early age he loved to play basketball at the YMCA, and later helped lead his high school teams in both basketball and cross country to memorable successes. Cross country practices on the carriage roads of Acadia National Park were a highlight of those years.

Brian attended Oberlin College for a year and made cherished friends there. But his path took him elsewhere as he embarked on a journey of life-long learning and personal discovery, eventually earning a degree in English literature from the University of Oregon, where he discovered and cultivated a love of poetry, Irish literature, folk music, and international folk dance. He continued to enjoy these activities while living in the Boston area for many years, while he worked at Boston University, Hampshire College, and Harvard University, in various areas of administration. During these decades he developed an interest in depth psychology and spirituality, and for his own enrichment completed a Master's degree in theology from Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, MA.

He married Lori Pearson in 1998 in Cambridge. Their two children, Celia and Soren Murphy-Pearson, were born in Northfield, MN. Brian and Lori remained friends after they divorced, and spent holidays and special times together as a family. In his work at Carleton College's Career Center, he shared the wisdom he had gained from a life of contemplation and exploration, encouraging students to find meaningful paths in life. He also shared lots of corny jokes. In recent years Brian enjoyed participating in the open mic at Hot Spot Music, where he played his guitar and shared his favorite songs by folk musicians such as Gordon Bok. His dog, Toby, was his best bud and companion, and they loved their visits to the dog park in Dundas.

Brian was a loving father and was cherished as a compassionate and considerate person, sibling, and friend. He is survived by his two children, by four of his siblings and their families, and by his former wife and her partner Joe. He also left behind 11 nieces and nephews to whom he was known as "Uncle." He was preceded in death by his beloved parents and by two siblings who he adored. The family would like to thank the incredible staff at the Givens Brain Tumor Center for their compassionate and extraordinary care.

A visitation will be held at Bierman Funeral Home on Wednesday, Feb. 2 from 4:00–7:00, with masks requested to be worn. A small funeral will be held at All Saints Episcopal Church.

Memorials may be given to Cancer Legal Care, the Northfield Community Action Center, or to All Saints Episcopal Church of Northfield.