



Dennis Knudson

April 18, 1948 - March 2, 2008

Dennis L. Knudson, 59, of Fort Collins, died Sunday, March 2, 2008 after a courageous battle against pancreatic cancer. Dennis was born April 18, 1948 in Wolf Point, Montana to Marion (Remmie) and Owen Knudson. He did his undergraduate education at the University of Illinois-Urbana, and received a Ph.D. from Oxford University, England. He was a professor at Yale University from 1977-1987. In 1987 he married Susan E. Brown and moved to Fort Collins where he became a professor at CSU. He enjoyed fishing, watching his daughters' sports and academic activities, and he had become an avid golfer in recent years. He is survived by his wife Susan, daughters Amy and Kylie; father Owen Knudson (Betty); sister Deborah Olesak; niece Dana Roberts; father-in-law, Robert Brown, brother-in-law, Robert Brown (Chris), sister-in-law Linda Carboni and husband Bob, and families. Dennis was preceded in death by his mother, Marion Knudson, and mother-in-law Marion Brown. In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial donations be made either to Our Saviours' Lutheran Church, Hospice of Larimer County or Dennis' daughter's college fund in care of Goes Funeral Care, 3665 Canal Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80524. A private interment will be held near the golf course, out of bounds, at Grandview Cemetery in Fort Collins. A memorial service will be held at 2:30 Wednesday at Our Saviours' Lutheran Church, 2000 South Lemay Ave, Ft. Collins.

Tribute Wall



“ *Dennis Knudson*

October 25, 2022 at 06:14 PM



“ *Dennis,
My dear sweet loving Brother, You will be in my heart forever, I will miss you dearly, you were someone I could always look up to, you were always there for me when I needed you, Though I can't pick up the phone and call you anymore you will be with me to eternity.
Love forever Deborah*

Deborah (Knudson) Olesak - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ *From the first time I met Dennis he was in my heart. His charm and sense of humor, as well as his intelligence made him such a unique and outstanding individual. I will never forget time spent with him and will always keep him in my heart. My prayers go out to Susan and the girls. May the Lord watch over them and keep them safe, as Dennis would want. Peace and Love.*

Debbie Fowler - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM



“ *You might not be with us on earth anymore but you will never be forgotten.*

Dana Roberts - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

LB

“ Some of my earliest childhood memories are of Dennis, when we all lived in Connecticut. I remember visiting his house - his earthy, adventurer clothes and hat that (in my mind's eye) made him look like Indiana Jones - the gigantic snake in an aquarium - his beaming face - his infectious, raspy laugh. As I grew older, I had the privilege of knowing his work from the perspective of a colleague and student. He made significant contributions to the study of mosquito genomics, and was a charismatic classroom teacher.

I am sorry to see you go, Dennis. Tight lines and clear water, old friend. My love to Susan, Amy and Kylie.

Lyricb Bartholomay - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

PR

“ *Many fond memories from North Chicago.*

Paul Rennie - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

BH

“ *When I was a kid we lived in Roselle, about an hour from Dennis and the rest of his family. We visited often, his parents Owen and Marion (my Godparents) had many family gatherings in their home. Dennis was in College in Illinois when I really have the most memories of him. Once he and some of his college friends had just bought this great album - American Pie. I remember sitting with them and listening - I was probably about eight. I remember playing chess - really he was just playing with me - as I had no skill and he proved it to me over and over again. Although we did not stay in contact over the years - I am sure he is the reason I went to college when I grew up - I looked up to him. He played a large part in motivating me to do more with my life. I wanted him to be proud of me. I am a better person because of him. Love Brenda*

Brenda Heston - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

BK

“ I will miss Dennis.

Boris Kondratieff - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

NK

“ Our sincere condolences to the Knudson family, Susan and daughters in the loss of Dennis, beloved father and husband. With all our sympathy from Nick and Shirley Karabatsos.

NICK KARABATSOS - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ Dennis Knudson was a expert in his chosen scientific field. He was very friendly kind and helpful when collaborating on a project. I wish the very best for his wife Susan and children.

Jeanette Bishop - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

GK

“ We are sad that a good friend and person has left us all too soon but are grateful to have known Dennis and shared such pleasant times with him. Our memories are of a kind and devoted father to his girls. We offer our condolences to Susan ,Amy & Kyle.

Graham & Peggy Kemp - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

TM

“ I will greatly miss Dennis and his sense of humor. I am glad I had such a good conversations with Dennis this last year.

I am sending my prayers and thoughts to Susan and the girls.
Bill

Thomas/Teresa Markiewicz - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

WH

“ Well Dennis, old friend, I was looking forward to the day when we could go trout fishing again on the Wisconsin tributaries that feed the Mississippi River. However, now when I fish those streams, I know you will be there in spirit. You were always willing to share your extensive scientific knowledge when we collaborated on research projects. I will always be grateful for your help. My sincere condolences to Susan, Amy, and Kylie.

Wallace Hansen - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

CS

“ Susan:
I extend my heartfelt sympathy on the passing of Dennis. He waged a courageous battle. I am sending my thought and prayers to you and your daughters. God bless you.

Carolyn Schultz - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

EP

“ Dennis, at work you did not suffer fools lightly, expecting much and raising everyone's potential around you. Having your respect was all that one needed. At home, we know your heart was great and warm. I will miss our conversations and repartee. I will miss talking with another Waukegan/North Chicago immigrant about life from a time long gone. Susan and family, our thoughts and prayers are with you. May your sadness that is here and now quickly fade to the joy of his memory.

Ed

Ed Peyronnin - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

JL

“ I just checked the obits in the Grand Forks Harold and saw Dennis'. I'm totally stunned. With both Mother & Dad gone, we don't hear any news. Owen & Debbie - I'm so very very sorry. To Dennis' wife and children my deepest sympathies.

I remember how we cousins used to get together so much when we were small and have so much fun!

Jackie (Knudson) Lindeen - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

DW

“ My deepest sympathy to the Knudson family. Our families haven't seen each other since my Dad died - so I was shocked to hear of Dennis's death. Please know that you are all in my thoughts and prayers.

Donna (Knudson) Weisz - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

SK

“ We are in shock here. I had the opportunity to visit with Dennis at a family reunion several years ago, but sadly, that was the last time. Our deepest sympathy to his wife and children, Owen, Betty, and Debbie. You are all in our thoughts and prayers.

Steve Knudson - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ ...Who was our Scandinavian soul mate
...Who learned to make lefsa along with Jon as the only two men in a Scandinavian cooking class here at the church and who annually made a batch for Christmas Eve (this past year's was particularly good)
...Who raved about the lutefisk, good or bad, although being Norwegian, he preferred his lutefisk with butter instead of white sauce
...Who, again because he was Norwegian, liked his herring with sour cream sauce while we prefer ours with the traditional Swedish vinaigrette
...Who loved good restaurants and well prepared food
...Who loved Scotch whiskey and dry Rob Roys, and whom we almost converted to martinis
...Who enjoyed long weekends in Santa Fe
...Who loved the Midwest. If he had stayed in Minnesota, he would certainly have been one of the "Grand Oh Ya's" in the Sons of Knut Lodge.
...Who was proud of his graduate education in England but never forgot his roots
...Who loved Hank Williams and Bob Dylan
...Who could always be trusted to give you an honest opinion, sometimes brutally honest
...Who was always good to Linda's Mom
...Who was a fishing buddy
...Who employed our children, gaining their gratitude and great respect - they really wanted to be here today
...Who was our colleague & collaborator, with all the ups & downs
...Who was our friend & the proud father of Amy and Kylie, our Goddaughter
...Who could explain the differences between a toe loop, a salchow, a lutz and an axel
...Who, among his most profound words of wisdom were "No matter where you go, there you are"
...You left us far too soon and we will miss you very much

Jon and Linda Carlson - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

MK

“ We didn't have the opportunity to spend much time together as adults but I do remember the times we spent together as kids in Fertile and McIntosh. Playing with the chemistry set in the basement, going to the Fertile theater (for free) on Sunday afternoon and going skiing. Good memories. Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire family.

Mike

michael knudson - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

VN

“ Your family is in my thoughts and prayers.

Victoria Nunamaker - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

“ *A Remembrance of Dennis Knudson
Presented at His Celebration of Life Service
Our Savior's Lutheran Church
March 5, 2008*

I have been remembering Dennis over these days since his death and thinking about how we will gather here to celebrate his life. We all knew Dennis in different ways, and few of us had anything like a picture of the whole man. In that way we are a little like the blind men trying to describe the elephant in that famous Rudyard Kipling poem (1). Today, one of the gifts we give each other is to share how we each knew Dennis so that all of us can better celebrate that life.

I, as you may know, was Dennis's department head at Colorado State University. In some sense I was his boss for 19 years. But if you know anything about Academia, and particularly if you know anything about Dennis, you know that the word boss doesn't have the same meaning in this context that it does in common usage. However, my relationship with Dennis, did give me the privilege of knowing him in a unique and special way.

I will remember him as a gifted scientist who was the smartest person in nearly every room he entered. He was passionate in his striving for excellence, and he held all of us to that same high standard he imposed on himself. I know that I am a better department head because of his influence.

Dennis made many scientific contributions, but his most unique and best were when he was applying the tools of mathematics and the computational power of computers to solving biological problems - most often related to molecular genetics and genomics involving viruses and bacteria and their hosts and vectors. His brilliant insights often led to discovering new relationships that enriched our understanding of whatever system was the object of his study.

In the last few years, scientists began using the term bioinformatics

- a term Dennis embraced - to refer to some of what he did. Dennis developed the first course at Colorado State (and one of the first nationally) that focused on Bioinformatics. His students thought of him as tough and demanding, but the best and brightest gained tremendously from the experience and many went on to make significant contributions using the tools they learned from him.

In addition to remembering him as a person of great intellect, I also remember times when he showed deep emotion, and when he reached out to young faculty with a genuine sense of caring for them and their success and helped them through difficult career decisions or to overcome troublesome obstacles in their research. I also remember him helping us figure out the possible causes of a baffling and frightening fever one of our children came down with - when none of the physicians involved could put all the pieces together.

All of us deal with the death of someone we are close to in our own way. A poem by Mary Oliver has meaning for me when I think about Dennis's death at what seems to me to be such an early age. And I think it may speak in part to Dennis's approach to life and death. I'd like to read a few lines from it.

When death comes/
like the hungry bear in autumn;/
when death comes and takes all the bright coins from his purse/
to buy me, and snaps the purse shut;/
when death comes/
like the measles-pox;/
I want to step through the door full of curiosity, wondering:/
what is it going to be like?/

When it's over, I want to say: all my life/
I was a bride married to amazement./
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms./

When it is over, I don't want to wonder/

if I have made of my life something particular, and real./

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world. (2) /

It is clear to me that the Dennis I remember did far more than simply visit this world.

(1) I have discovered since I spoke these words at the service for Dennis that my memory of the author of the poem "The Blind Men and the Elephant" was incorrect and that the author is actually John Godfrey Saxe. Saxe apparently got his inspiration from a South Asi

Tom Holtzer - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

PC

“ *I will always remember working in the lab at CSU and Dennis dropping the refridgerator on his toe. I teased him for weeks. Then there was a time we went to Sante Fe and enjoyed stuffing our faces with great food and watching football at the timeshare condo. I will miss Dennis and his sense of humor.*

*Love always,
Pete*

Peter Carlson - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM

OK

“ *To my son, not a day goes by that I don't think of you,I have a hole in my heart because you're gone, I will always remember the great time we had in October when you came out to see us, you looked so fit and healthy,it's such a shock to know you're gone, I will love you forever...*

Dad

Owen K Knudson - March 02, 2008 at 12:00 AM