



## **REMEMBERING Bill Turner**

December 16, 2022



It is with great sadness that we write to let our community know that Bill has died. He was taken from us far too suddenly by complications arising from cancer treatments.

Heidi, his daughter, writes, "thank you to everyone for helping me through this time and for all your love of my Dad. I know he loved you all too".

Bill was a beautiful, heart-full Salt Spring character who had many friends through his diverse interests and community volunteering - his professional work, his Bridge group, Tai Chi practice, sharing his reading finds, DAISSI board director and volunteer, and attending cultural events to which he invited dear friends, old and new.

Bill's parents, Beulah and Jack, predeceased him and he is survived by his daughter Heidi (Scott), 3 grandchildren Adam, Julia and Sadie and his treasured pets Joanie, Jesse and Joyce.

Bill ran the Birdsong Bed and Breakfast with his beloved husband Edward Poole who died on Dec 9, 2012. Bill and Edward were together for 26 years.

A passionate educator, Bill retired from full-time teaching when he moved to Salt Spring Island in 2006. His desire to connect with and support youth did not end, he continued as teacher-on-call at Gulf Islands Secondary School for a number of years, where the students called him Billy T. He was instrumental in founding the first GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) at GISS. Bill continued to advocate for queer and trans kids at the High School and District level until his death.

Bill was a life-long learner. He was lead by his heart, his profound empathy and care for others, to shift old ideas. He kept stretching and growing to embrace new points of view and understand other people's struggles. Bill stood up and stood out with love.

Bill was a founding member and long time board member of GLOSSI, (Gays and

Lesbians of SSI), an activist organization, which expanded to become DAISSI, (Diverse and Inclusive SSI). He was its only continuous board member, his service spanning the 18 years of GLOSSI/DAISSI's work curating Pride. He was an active supporter in bringing Pride to SSI for years, made possible in part by Bill's fundraising efforts around town, developing positive relationships as he went. He was instrumental in fostering acceptance and offering support to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community on Salt Spring and beyond.

Bill is remembered as a kind person, generous with his heart, good natured, a lover of poetry and music, a story teller, and an enthusiastic interior decorator. Bill was an opera lover who, with his husband Edward, visited opera houses around the world.

Bill loved extravagant galas and dinner parties, was known for his outgoing hospitality and is recognized by his black and white boa and matching top hat. Bill knew how to glam it up!

Bill was lovingly supported in his last weeks by his friend from afar - Felix Bañuelos.

DAISSI and friends of Bill are planning A Gathering for Bill on February 14, a high holiday in the queer community, as a day to honour Love. Details will follow in a few weeks on [www.prideallyear.ca](http://www.prideallyear.ca). At this gathering we will have an opportunity to reflect on and honour Bill's impact and legacy in our community, his tremendous work to improve the lives of queer people on Salt Spring in more ways than we can name, and the deep and personal meaning of his life as he shared it with all of us.

May we all be bearers of the warm hospitality Bill so richly shared with us all.

... friends of Billy T.

