

The passing of Noël Shank, beekeeper of Hanmer, Ontario - A life devoted to bees and beekeeping

It is with regret that I inform you of my dear husband's passing, on Saturday, March 13, 2021 at our home in Hanmer, the beautiful honey farm with the bright blue tin roof, that so many of you have visited over the years. You may know that Noël had been battling cancer for almost three years now and that, following a last and valiant attempt at getting rid of it with treatments, he sadly lost his battle to the disease. That said, my husband, ever the combatant and tenacious soul he was, never lost interest in his great passion of beekeeping, and it will come as no surprise to any of you who knew him well, that he stayed involved and active in his beekeeping business, right to the end.

It was his wish to spend the last days of his life on our farm, a place he reveled in, for its simple pleasures and natural beauty. The vastness of the land here appealed to him and I believe it was his way of reconnecting with his childhood roots, having been born and raised on a family farm in Bonfield, Ontario. He was always happiest when working with his bees or in his workshop building beehive supplies.

His most ardent wish, when we discussed about the apiary and the future of our business, was that the beekeeping community remain strong and fervent both here in Sudbury, and beyond. But also, that the collective knowledge to which he had so vastly contributed, continue to be widely shared among beekeepers to allow each individual to thrive and, to maintain awareness about the importance of bees and beekeeping for the common good.

One of the things Noël loved the most was sharing his knowledge and best practices. He voraciously read books and watched web documentaries to stay on top of his field, he often took on opportunities to educate on hives and bees, and most of all, he enjoyed mentoring new beekeepers. Sharing his profound passion for, and connection to beekeeping, is what brought him joy, right to the end. My wish is that all of this may constitute a humble legacy, which will live on in our beekeeping community

In closing, I wish each and every one of you many years of successful beekeeping.

Nicole Shank