



Stanley Robert Shaffer

February 10, 1940 - June 29, 2026

Born in Ottawa Civic Hospital, Ottawa, Stan was the first-born child of Frances and Harold Shaffer. Stan's birth was followed by his sister Rhea, 13 months later and then his sister Dorothy and brother Jayeson. Stan reminisced that his father adored Rhea and that his mother having to deal with two very young children, had her hands full. Stan quotes that this often left him feeling "left out." Thus, childhood was a roller coaster of ups and downs that planted the seeds of self-doubt. Consequently, Stan was often self-critical and judgmental of himself. He admired his father for his many academic and business achievements, his world travels, time in a Kibbutz and as a student in Germany during the rise of the Nazis. But he could never truly connect.

Thus, at 19 he left home, moving to Los Angeles to be with his oldest buddy, Les Swartz. Together they surfed the waters of Venice Beach and travelled through the states in Les's 1956 Ford Thunderbird. The following years were a kaleidoscope of communes, free spirited hippiedom, the Beats, jazz, long hair, poetry and life lived in the fullest experimental searching forms of the 1960's and early 1970's. Stan's love of cannabis, spirits and a ribald sense of humour carried over into the coming years as his academic and artistic roots began to flourish. It's a lengthy list:

- Sir Williams University in Montreal, highest graduate in the arts, received the Governor General's Birks Medal of Honor.
- Master of Arts at State University of New York - Binghamton
- Universite' de Vincennes, Paris, France
- PhD candidate at SUNY-Buffalo, New York

Still in the thralls of communal living, Stan and friends moved to Prince George, BC, Canada. Here, life took root as he was hired as a professor of literature at the College of New Caledonia in 1974. Always outspoken in his liberal views, he planted the seeds of literary and film exploration by founding Cinema CNC, showing foreign and new age films, He established the Prince George Film Festival, programmed the REEL World and Moving Pictures Film Festival, co-organized the Canada Council Visiting Writers Series and was Board Chair of Theatre Northwest. His passion lay in connecting literature and film. In his publication of "A DECADE OF CINEMA IN PRINCE GEORGE" he states; *"I began to imagine myself as a cultural emissary, bringing not only a particular academic training, but also a range of depth and artistic appreciation."*

Despite all these accomplishments, Stan had little contact with his family as he never lived close enough to regularly connect. His search was constant for self-acceptance, stability and a "feeling of family." This led him to meditation, Buddhist practices, and a time at Hollyhock on Cortes Island seeking to accept and honour himself. Also, during these years Stan had two marriages, both of which ended in divorce, though he did keep in touch with stepsons Max and Gareth. Max and his wife Martina, currently working artists who live in France, kept in regular contact over the years. Stan greatly cherished this connection.

Then...I... Susanna Uchatius, living in Prince George, in 1996, was seeking a copy of Sylvia Plath's, *The Bell Jar*, for theatre research. A friend said to ask Stan Shaffer, as he had donated a ton of books to the library. I was a bit hesitant, as I knew him as a professor at the college, but thought...I will email him and ask. He phoned a few days later, apologized for the delay as he was at a jazz festival in Halifax, but asked could he come over. I gave him my address, and he showed up within the hour. My special needs daughter Alex and her friend Lindi were having a sleepover. Stan arrived in very professorial attire. He didn't have the book! Both girls put him through the wringer with play, Alex being speech impaired and Lindi with cerebral palsy, and he just played along. I was impressed. He then asked if I would go for a coffee to the Muffin Break down the road. The walk was icy and he offered his arm. I thought...this is nice...and there we were! Our connection quickly became deep and truthful, with a shared love of literature, film, theatre, books, music and arts of all genres. I had to move to Burnaby to continue theatre work and Stan retired from CNC. The college held a dinner and film celebration, honoring all the film and literature gifts that Stan had contributed over the many years. They asked what film he would like to watch in the theatre and he chose the Robert Altman film *Nashville*. The theatre at CNC now bears the plaque that states: *"This theatre is dedicated to Stan Shaffer in recognition of his tireless efforts promoting the love of film to both students and staff of the college and the citizens of Prince George -1974 to 2002. Thanks for everything Stan"*.

Following this, we three settled together in Burnaby. Stan went on to teach at Fraser Valley University for a few years, then became the editor of the Right to Food Zine in the Vancouver Downtown East Side, inclusively supporting writers and artists to edit and publish their stories.

Susanna went on to become the Artistic Director of Theatre Terrific, the longest running all-inclusive theatre in Canada. Following many loving years, marriage in 2003, Stan, Susanna and Alex called themselves the Three Musketeers. Together they shared the love of nature, of film, of theatre, of literature, of music, and for Stan in particular the beat of Jazz! They travelled to New York, to Vienna, Austria to visit Susanna's relatives, to Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal to visit Stan's family and friends and to Istanbul and Izmir and more. Threesome vacations were spent in any tiny cabin by water, usually on the Gulf Islands.

The time came when Rhea could no longer care for her mother Frances and her sister Dorothy in Toronto and asked if we would find a place for them in Burnaby. Stan and I found a home for them in a nearby supported residence. Stan was so glad that he could now take his mother for lunch at the local deli and that Dorothy could visit for family dinners. It was a profound reconnection with his family. Stan kept his wonderful talent of conversation with any and everybody. Anywhere and anytime he sat with someone, he wanted to know all about you. He was a true "people person."

In 2020, living as the "*love of each other's lives*", Stan and Susanna, sadly bore the news of Stan's cancer diagnosis and for six years held each other tight as various cancers took their toll. Susanna retired as the Artistic Director of Theatre Terrific in 2023 and together they sought the rays of joy and sunlight in each and every day. On Monday, June 29/2026 Stan quietly and in peace, said goodbye with his loving wife, Susanna and "daughter" Alex by his side. He is lovingly remembered by his wife, Susanna, daughter Alex, sister Dorothy, brother Jayeson, niece Deena and her son's Jonah and Evan along with extended family and many longtime caring friends and neighbours.

Rest in Peace beloved Stan, your memory beats on!