

In Memoriam: Guy Richard Knudsen '78

Professor, attorney and humanitarian, music was his passion

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After serving in the U.S. Navy, Guy Knudsen took advantage of the GI Bill to attend UNH. He graduated with a B.S. in forestry and went on to earn master's and doctoral degrees in plant pathology from Cornell University. In 2007, after earning a J.D. degree from

Taft Law School, he passed the state bar in both California and Washington state. While his professional pursuits may have appeared superficially diverse, his law practice and his teaching were rooted in a common passion: social justice for the planet and its inhabitants.

Knudsen was a professor at the University of Idaho from 1987 until his death on May 29, 2016, from complications of ALS. He taught courses in microbial ecology, soil biology and plant pathology and enjoyed mentoring graduate students, taking great pride in them as they established their own successful careers.

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Knudsen and his wife, fellow University of Idaho plant professor Louise-Marie Dandurand, met at a soil fungus conference in Boise and married in 1990. They were among the founders of the Paloma Institute, a nonprofit organization that sponsors programs throughout the world dedicated to sustaining healthy ecosystems and planning for a socially just future. Following the 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti, Paloma Institute's Farming is Life program was instrumental in supporting community gardening and health initiatives by supplying tools and seed to family farmers. In addition, institute members traveled to Haiti to provide agricultural training and assist with health and sanitation issues. The work Knudsen helped organize continues today with members helping to supply basic needs such as vaccinations for the island's donkeys and other animals.

Knudsen was also affiliated with the Lawyers' Earthquake Relief Network, which works with Haitian attorneys to assist earthquake victims. He was active with many other groups, including the Washington State Veterans Bar Association, Vietnam Veterans of America and Paralyzed Veterans of America, and provided pro bono legal assistance to several organizations in and around Moscow, Idaho, where he resided.

Passionate about Pacific Northwest wilderness areas, Knudsen especially loved the mountains, says his wife. In his free time he enjoyed back-country skiing during the winter months and horseback riding and biking in milder weather, activities he shared with his daughter Celine and son Liam.

Despite a busy schedule of teaching and volunteering, Knudsen always found time for music. An accomplished composer who also played electric guitar, "music was his soul," says Louise-Marie. His specialty was the blues, which he played with a number of creatively named local bands including Bare Wires and Beggar's Alley. His talents were sought after at annual gatherings

in the Moscow area, including HempFest and Rendezvous in the Park.

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