



Stanley P. Bonk

July 18, 1938 - December 5, 2019

Stanley “Stan” Bonk—known affectionately by close friends and family as “Stash”—was born and raised in the tight knit Polish community of Reading, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Central High School in 1956. Stash met his one true love and life partner, Anna Mae Lewandowski, while studying Mechanical Engineering at Villanova University. After his graduation, he and Anna relocated to Connecticut where they raised four children and Stash began his professional career with United Technologies Fuel Cell Group. Stash was passionate about his work and loved his colleagues.

Stash’s curiosity and natural ability to build and maintain close relationships carried him through a rich life of learning, adventure and discovery. He was an artist, a lover of music, a world traveler, and lifelong learner. Stan’s love of live music led him and Anna to Greenwich Village in the 60’s to experience jazz legends. He survived the iconic Woodstock festival with friends and danced to zydeco with his grandchildren. Stash’s fondness for the arts did not stop with music. He tapped into his own creative talents when he became a potter in the 70’s. He was a member of and actively engaged with Wesleyan Potters for over 35 years. Stan was a creator up until his last days. His other passions included gardening, UCONN Women’s basketball, the New York Times crossword puzzle, and a good bowl of pistachio ice cream.

Stash’s interests were not all domestic. He and Anna spent many years traveling the world together, connecting with relatives in France, Poland and England. His time spent abroad fed his desire to serve causes greater than himself. After retirement, Stash continued to pursue and integrate his passions for engineering, travel and social responsibility by volunteering for a clean water project with Engineers Without Borders in India and Nepal.

To those of us who loved him, Stash was a true Renaissance Man. He was gracious and warm-hearted. Passionate about living a full, good life. An engineer’s engineer. Creative potter. Inquisitive scientist. Lover of nature. Humanist. Quick witted gentleman. Sentimental devoted husband. Great listener. True friend, and—most important of all—loving husband, father and grandfather.

Stash's funeral services were held privately. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to UPenn Multiple Myeloma Research Fund, online at <https://giving.apps.upenn.edu/fund?program=MC&fund=843447>

We welcome you to share your memories, photos and experiences. We hope you visit this page for many years to come.

Comments



“ 8 files added to the album Memories Album



Stephanie Tirado - March 07, 2020 at 01:25 PM



“ I loved Stan Bonk. He was a wonderful person that I'm sure we are all glad to have known. His willingness to mentor and calm demeanor showed that he was cast from a different mold. Although I know of Stan's Polish ancestry, to me he was a true Bohemian. Some of his pottery is a treasured wedding gift. One of my fondest memories was getting Stan to come to South Deerfield , MA to a converted roller skating rink to hear the Allman Brothers play before they hit the arena circuit.

Stan also lead the way to get involved with Engineers Without Borders. His trips to India and Nepal speak to his professionalism, his sense of adventure, and his willingness to share other cultures. My own trip tp Nepal is my proudest accomplishment.

I'll miss him greatly.
Namaste.

John Donahue - January 05, 2020 at 08:11 PM



“ Thank you John for sharing your memories of my dad, it certainly helps to share his absence , thank you Jenny

Jen - January 07, 2020 at 08:06 PM



“ All I learned about Structures I learned from Stan. He would talk through the drawings we brought to him and would explain what would work, and what wouldn't and more importantly, why. Always with good humor and a smile. The epitome of being a good engineer and a great partner in the calling (we knew it wasn't a career) we all called Fuel Cells. My favorite memory was working with Stan to determine how we had destroyed and shell HEX in the pressurized reformer test stand. The precise technical term was "banannified" wrought by the well-known process of "banannafication". I just loved it when he talked technical.

Larry Preston - January 05, 2020 at 08:05 PM



“ Thank you Larry for sharing, I know my dad enjoyed your enthusiasm in engineering, and your conversation

Jen - January 07, 2020 at 08:09 PM



“ Stan was a true gentleman and a wonderful friend. I will always cherish the memories of our many hikes in the White Mountains and our racquetball games together.

He was also Mr. Structures--I know that I personally learned more from Stan than any text book I ever used.

May he rest in peace,
Tom

Tom Corrigan - January 05, 2020 at 08:00 PM



“ It was during the DOE Molten Carbonate program in the 80's that I got to know Stan. We had just purchased mechanical test machines for doing strength measurements on an array of edge plate spring configurations. From there it led to all the other development programs we were involved with over those succeeding years. As alluded to by Tom, any practical understanding of the strength of materials that we have, likely originated with Stan and not the text books.

Over the course of those years, and as with many of you, he became a great friend.

He was the inspiration for the house on Martha's Vineyard, partnering with George M., Myron K. Fred K., and myself. It was memorable decade and a great run!

What's more he is the only fuel cell engineer I know that attended and survived a;; three/four days at Woodstock, driving there in his VW van, 50 years ago this year!

I spoke with Stan a few months ago. He was not good, but hopeful.

Rest in Peace our good friend,
Henry

Henry Cote - January 05, 2020 at 07:57 PM



“ Thank you , yes my dad was the vessel of hope

Jen - January 07, 2020 at 07:58 PM



“ My relationship with Stan was mainly outside the workplace in that Stan and I worked in totally different areas. Susan and I had a close relationship with Stan and Anna for more than 40 years. We have traveled abroad together, and to several women's basketball Final Fours, in Tampa, San Antonio, and New Orleans. We were also partners for 15 years in a vacation house on Martha's Vineyard which led to many fun-filled weekends there to clean, garden, socialize, etc . We made fall trips to their Cape May house to do some bird watching and enjoy the restaurant scene. And then there were our pre-Easter sausage making parties. The bottom line, a wonderful friendship,. so important to both of us. I'm going to miss him greatly. And our love goes out to Anna at this time of tremendous loss.

Fred Kemp - January 05, 2020 at 07:49 PM



“ Thank you Fred and Susan, I'm happy as was my dad Stan, to see you a couple summers ago

Jen - January 07, 2020 at 08:12 PM



“ Starting out in fuel cells straight out of college, I was a wide-eyed boy amongst smart and intimidating men. Stan's cubicle was one of the few places one could go and be warmly welcomed, feel free to ask dumb questions and find wisdom and humor along the way. I've no doubt, his legacy lives on in the kindest parts of the people lucky enough to meet him along the way. RIP good man!

Mike Gorman - December 20, 2019 at 01:59 PM



“ Thank you for your kind words out my dad

Jen - January 07, 2020 at 08:14 PM



“ Anna,. What a shock to hear of Stash's passing. Some people you see as living forever, he was one. He gave so much to those who came in contact with him whether at Wesleyan or in projects around the world. He will be missed but not forgotten.

My condolences to you and your family.

Ann Ahamed

Ann Ahamed - December 14, 2019 at 09:54 AM



“ So sorry to the whole family for your great lost, Stash was a unique person in so many ways, he lived a full life left us with so many memories for all of us, one precious one of ours is spending Christmas Eve with both of our families together, once again because of his full life we also got to enjoy & hold in our hearts these wonderful memories. Rest well my friend, neighbor. Family stay strong, thinking of you all. Love & friendship, Roland & Mary Jane

Roland, Mary Jane Labbe - December 13, 2019 at 09:49 AM



“ Thank you Mary Jane and Roland , so many memories with our families, and the Christmas Eve and day celebration's so full of live

Thank you for sharing,

Jenny

jennifer bonk - December 15, 2019 at 09:28 PM



“ Random thoughts about my great friend, pseudo dad and partner in crime Stanley "Stash" Bonk ... how about we start with science and art and his ability to function at the highest level of balancing both sides of the brain ... like taking charge of workshops at the Wesleyan Pottery where he organized world famous ceramic craftsmen to come in to give demonstrations and discussions, then going to his studio and making art from the inspiration total support system for artists, especially those of us who were pushing the boundaries of what art speaks to ... world traveler ... brilliant designer ... Engineers Without Border's leader in under developed countries ... loving father and husband and friend , not only in America, but all over the world ... visionary in the hopes of saving the planet through innovative energy consumption and political activism ... aka the fuel cell, of which he helped develop and attained many patents ... always open to new ideas and experimentation in the pursuit of excellence in ceramics ... awesome dancer, great sense of humor and annoyingly always questioning the metaphysical aspects of the universe ... married for over 59 years to Anna Lewandowski - a strong, creative and incredible woman ... managing and working on 4 properties at once for many year's so that his awesome children (Steffy, Chris, Jenny and Kathy) would have a great future ... always the best at whatever he attempted to undertake in life ... loved gin and tonic tipping time and great live music of all genres ... a total progressive thinker who valued the planet and it's inhabitants over the pursuit of financial gain or power ... one of the most passionate, creative, supportive, innovative and brilliant human beings that ever walked this earth ... there you have it ... I will miss him and always cherish our 40 year friendship forever ...

Peter Snyder - December 12, 2019 at 10:56 PM



“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



steffy tirado - December 12, 2019 at 10:41 PM



“ So very sorry to learn of this. Uncle Stash, as he was known to me as a kid, was always the "life of the party" and I can still see his spinning clay pot wheels at your home (in my mind's eye). I've had a great time watching you all in your world travels. I know his warm smile comforts you all still now (probably born with the most 'natural' and catching smile I can think of - - that never aged, even in the facebook posts, and that he was lucky to pass that same smile on to his kids. Again, so very sorry, Jeff. A photo of Stash and my Dad in their MG as late teenagers - - one of my favorite of them.



Jeff Meshinsky - December 12, 2019 at 03:38 PM



“ It's been rare in my life to find such fast and great friendship as I did with Stan. We met on the racquetball courts and continued friendship over the years. We competed hard and laughed hard afterwards with breakfast at Reins Deli or long conversations about anything and everything. He was modest and sincere and passionate about life and the world. He loved his family and seemed to treasure all the good things in a long and well-lived life.
I've missed him since he moved away.
And now I will miss him more.

The thoughts and prayers of my wife and myself to the whole family.
He was a unique and important person to all who had a chance to get to know him, and he left an impression on the world around him.

We'll not forget him. We'll remember his smile and his laughter.

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Jeff and Diane Hutton Vernon, CT

Jeff Hutton - December 12, 2019 at 09:05 AM



“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



carrie and Mark Anderson - December 12, 2019 at 02:17 AM



“ Brazil trip with Artie and Mark Anderson

carrie and Mark Anderson - December 12, 2019 at 02:18 AM



“ He's the greatest man I know. I'm a better man for knowing him

Albert Murray - December 11, 2019 at 10:53 PM



“ Stash was one of the kindest and most helpful person I have known. He made life better for others from Wesleyan Potters to India! I enjoyed going to Polish movies with him and Anna. He is missed. My condolences to the family.

Alice Schumacher - December 11, 2019 at 08:34 PM



“ I met Stash about 37-38 years ago. Stash immediately made me feel at home, comfortable and very welcoming into his home and life. One of the first observation I made and was impressed by was his art work i.e. beautiful pottery and assortment of art. Stash's LP collection which included several Bob Dylan albums and so many other prophetic musicians told me he was an incredible person and thinker... Stash always, in an intelligent calm fashion would address ignorance with common sense and futuristic thinking. Stash was the Patriarch of the family and the extended family. He did not rule with an iron fist but instead with kindness, intelligence, excitement and acceptance. Hiking the White Mountains, opening up MV, teaching us about the Japanese culture and so much more. He was a true father figure that I lacked. He was an inspiration and taught me so much about life and culture. I love Stash and Anna so much.

Wilson Tirado - December 11, 2019 at 05:59 PM



“ Thanks for sharing dad

Isabel - December 11, 2019 at 10:25 PM



“ You are welcome Daughter Izzy

Wilson Tirado - December 12, 2019 at 09:59 PM



“ To Anna and family,
My sincere sympathy to you and your family. I was surprised to see this in the paper and wanted to say that I have fond memories of both of you. We had many good times in Tolland. I did not realize that you had moved and hope that you were able to enjoy that area.
As mentioned in the obituary, he certainly was a wonderful person in every way.
Fondly,
Jackie and Jack Green

Jacqueline Green - December 11, 2019 at 03:08 PM



“ My deepest sympathies go out to the family of Stan... I enjoyed the short time we had playing tennis together.., he was a fine man! Marilyn Lepor

marilyn lepor - December 11, 2019 at 09:36 AM



“ I recall years after his retirement, running into him at a robotics exhibit, encouraging and sharing his knowledge with high school students. He was a role model and touched many lives. The Tirado-Perez family extend our condolences to Sash's entire family. He will be dearly missed, may he RIP.

Elizabeth Perez - December 10, 2019 at 10:19 PM



“ My deepest condolences to Anna, Steffy, Chris, Jennifer, Kathy and the entire Bonk family. I'll cherish the fond memories I have of Stash. God bless Michael Bergeron

Michael Bergeron - December 10, 2019 at 07:27 PM



“ I have a lifetime of fond memories with Stash and family- Many at Stone Harbor or Cape May. I would often tag along as a kid for a few days when my dad would go help paint or do some other project at the shore. Stash had a keen wit and there were always many, many laughs. My life is richer for having known him.

Matt Auchter - December 10, 2019 at 07:27 PM



“ My loving father, my Champion



Jennifer Bonk - December 10, 2019 at 06:59 PM



“ He was the most approachable and friendly person you could ever meet. A kind hearted person that will be missed by all.

MaryAnn Perez-Brescia - December 11, 2019 at 09:40 AM