



Thomas Hukari Obituary

March 11, 1942 - July 17, 2025

Over several years Tom's health declined and following a stroke in February 2024 he moved into a full-time nursing care home where he was well cared for and all his needs were generously and lovingly met. He died Thursday evening, July 17 2025.

Tom was preceded in death by his brother Bill, sisters Jill and Sally.

Tom grew up in a Finnish community in Hood River, Oregon. After high school he served a short time in the Army and often told the story of sharing basic training with Jimmy Hendrix. After his military service and return to his home, he attended college and moved onto graduate studies, earning a PhD in Linguistics. He then took up a position as a linguistics Professor at the University of Victoria in Victoria B.C., Canada.

Within his academic research he spent considerable time and energy documenting local indigenous languages and spent a great deal of time with the Cowichan Tribe. He learned to speak the Hul'q'umi'num' language and created a dictionary. He also collected many Cowichan stories as told by the Cowichan Elders. His large collection of spoken language tapes, native stories and video tapes of Cowichan elders have been cataloged and digitized into the archives of the University of Victoria and Simon Fraser University. His work is a lasting legacy to the First Nations of Vancouver Island.

Away from his academic work he was an avid kayaker. He was very often in his sea kayak, touring along the shores of Vancouver Island and the BC mainland coast. He frequently paddled his white water kayak on rivers or in the surf.

At his request, there will be no funeral/memorial service. His ashes will be scattered along one of his favourite sea kayaking routes.