

Roland Philip Dion Obituary

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Roland P. Dion, beloved and devoted husband, father, and grandfather (Pépère). Roland passed away peacefully, and unexpectedly, at his home in Winooski, Vermont on Sunday, August 25, 2024 (the day after his 56th wedding anniversary). The depth of love he had for his family and friends was endless and constant. The love we have for him is just as strong and never-ending. Roland was a caring friend and community member, with a kind heart full of grace and warmth. As his daughters said, "There was never a father who loved his daughters more." Roland will be immensely missed. His wit and sense of humor was top-notch, and his passion for hosting, cooking for, and gathering with his family and friends was well-known and well-loved. It is hard to express the immeasurable love, respect, and admiration his family and friends had for him (and he had for us) throughout his life.

Roland touched many lives in his 84+ years. Son of Philip Dion and Rollande (Fay) Dion, he was born on November 13, 1939 in a little yellow house on East Allen Street in Winooski, near his Grandfather's farm in the area of Dion Street. His family moved to Burlington where he attended Nazareth School and Cathedral (Rice) High School. While in high school and college, he worked part-time at the A&P grocery store on Pearl Street. He was also a Water Safety Instructor at Camp Holy Cross for a number of years (and later taught his grandchildren to swim). Upon his graduation from Resurrection College in Kitchner, Ontario, Canada, he then pursued four years of post-graduate studies in Loretto, Pennsylvania. In addition to these studies, Roland graduated from the Boy Scouts of America Schiff Scout Reservation as a Scout Executive in Morristown, New Jersey, was employed by the Tamarack Council as a District Scout Executive in Rutherford, New Jersey, and also served as an Assistant Director for the Boy Scouts Camp.

He married his devoted wife, Julie, and soon settled in their home state of Vermont. He worked for the City of Winooski for nearly four decades in various capacities, as both a city employee and volunteer, before retiring in 2010. Roland began his career with the city as Housing Code Enforcement Officer and also worked for the Model Cities Program. In 1979 he was appointed Director of the Winooski Senior Citizen Center. Working with a multitude of personalities, with varied personal beliefs and attitudes, he was always understanding, patient, and caring... truly inspiring. He developed innovative programs that assisted seniors in their daily lives, such as an Alzheimer's support group, home meal delivery, and tax assistance, as well as fun activities including bowling, bus trips, and the Center's annual Christmas Party and Volunteer Appreciation Party. Roland attended numerous lectures, seminars, and training programs in gerontology at St. Michael's College and UVM, as well as educational programs provided by the Champlain Valley Agency on Aging (now known as Age Well). Roland's deep religious faith and support of youth education were central parts of his life. He served as the CCD Coordinator for both St. Francis Xavier and St. Stephens Church. The City of Winooski and local community organizations greatly benefited from his dedicated work and effective leadership during his tenure.

Roland is survived by his wife, Julie (Mercure); his daughter Lizabeth Dion and her sons Emilio Cardinale and Alessandro Cardinale; his daughter Rebecca Dion-Smith, her husband Aaron Smith, and their son Samuel Smith; his daughter Jennifer Dion Stearns, her husband Donald (Don) Stearns, and their daughters Evelyn Stearns and Eliza Stearns; and his siblings, Jeannine Beauchemin and Raymond (Ray) Dion. Roland also leaves a large extended family, including a plethora of sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, many nieces and nephews, and many close cousins and friends.

Roland was predeceased by his parents; his brother Valere Dion; his nephews Thomas Dion and Stephen Dion; his brother-in-law Theodore (Ted) Jones; his sister-in-law Sally Dion; and his brother-in-law Raymond Beauchemin. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at Saint Francis Xavier Church on St. Peter Street in Winooski, on Friday, September 6, 2024 at 1:00 PM. An interment ceremony will follow the Mass at Saint Francis Xavier Cemetery on Weaver Street in Winooski. A private celebration of his life will be held at a later date with close family. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Roland's memory to Age Well Vermont (www.agewellvt.org), 875 Roosevelt Hwy, Ste 210, Colchester, Vermont 05446.