GILL, Warren (June 4, 1949 - September 7, 2010)

Warren Gill died peacefully on September 7, 2010 in the Palliative Care Unit of VGH, with music playing softly and his dear Shaundehl gently comforting him. His beloved city where he was born and raised, and which was the focus of his work and play, sparkled outside his windows.

Warren is survived by his best friend and wife Shaundehl Runka, his parents Phyllis and George Gill, brother Wayne Gill (Sue), nephew Chris and niece Jenn. He is also mourned by Shaundehl’s family: Celia Runka, Gary Runka, Joan Sawicki, Cayla Runka and nephew Marek, together with countless friends and colleagues who supported him and his family over the past 18 difficult months during his extraordinary and tireless contest with cancer.

Warren was one of the sweetest men on this planet and his 'fan club' comes from all walks of life. He made everyone feel at ease and was a kind and loving person who was a constant support for family, friends and colleagues; never judgmental, a peerless sounding board and confidante. Warren's energy and love for life was contagious, as was his laughter. His keen intelligence and quick wit, combined with his optimism, enthusiasm and aura of happiness, carried him through life, even in times of great stress and physical difficulty.

After graduating from Prince of Wales High School, Warren completed his B.A. and M.A. in Geography and Ph.D. in Urban Studies at UBC. His career at Simon Fraser University began in 1977 and continued for 33 years, culminating in the position of Vice President University Relations. Central to his accomplishments at Simon Fraser University was the development of the SFU downtown campus from its first storefront on Howe Street. The building of the Harbour Centre Campus and the expansion over the last decade to include the SFU Wosk Centre for Dialogue, the Segal Graduate School of Business and SFU Woodward's are all evidence of his tireless work with others and fearless optimism. Warren also contributed to the expansion of SFU to Surrey Central City. His association with SFU was a source of great pride and his work with his many colleagues brought him much pleasure.

Warren treasured his association with the SFU geography department, where he was a popular teacher of urban and transportation geography. He served on many committees, and regularly supervised graduate and honours undergraduate students.

Warren was committed to maintaining his academic interests and wrote and commented extensively on transportation, the cruise industry, and popular music. He was also known as a radio and television commentator on urban and transportation issues. Warren regularly presented at conferences across North America, including the Canadian Association of Geographers, the Association of American Geographers and the Western Regional Science Association, of which he was proud to be President Elect.

Strongly connected to Vancouver, Warren served on many boards including the Vancouver Academy of Music, the Downtown Vancouver Association, Fire and Rescue Services Citizen’s Advisory Committee, the Vancouver Museum Commission, and the Northwest Cruiseship Association.
Warren's deep love of music was at the core of his being. He learned to play instruments at a young age and was in R & B and rock and roll bands from high school to the present, including the Spectres, Mantra and Wager. He was a consummate bass player and thrived on being part of the best boys club ever.

Warren loved many things and had many interests: martinis, trains, architecture, cooking, golf, cats (Tali and Oban), great wine, Dr. Who, cruising, Earl Grey tea, magazines and books, spot prawns, music of all kinds, modern design, bike riding, ice cream (Cherry Garcia), ships, travel and exploring, licorice allsorts, talking, chocolate, baseball and trivia.

A memorial service will be held at 2pm on Sunday September 19, 2010 at SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings St. Vancouver. In lieu of flowers, gifts in Warren's memory can be made to the Dr. Warren Gill Memorial Fund at SFU or to the Royal Hudson Preservation Fund of the West Coast Railway Association.

See you later alligator...