



## David Chester Stanaway

December 16, 1943 - August 23, 2024

The world has lost another talented musician, singer, song writer and teacher. David Chester Stanaway, age 80, died peacefully at the Ball Hospice House on August 23, 2024, after a six-year battle with Parkinson's Disease. Dave was the oldest of five, born on December 16, 1943, in Sault Saint Marie, Michigan, to Chester and Louetta (Gabriel) Stanaway.

The two main things Dave did for both love and money were music and teaching. He was a self-taught musician whose love of music, talent and his singing ability were inherited from his mother. Dave played professionally for the enjoyment of others, with guitar being his favorite instrument. He was also proficient on keyboards, bass guitar and harmonica. Though quiet by nature, Dave loved to sing and play for an audience. Even when he held a full-time day job, for many years he performed at local venues on weekends and sang at weddings. With his son, Jeffrey, and siblings who also inherited this talent, he enjoyed performing or just jamming with local musicians.

The Stingrays was his first band during college. Later, he traveled with a road band, Larry Slatter and the Executives, until he returned to college to complete a degree. Dave graduated from Sault Area High School in 1962. He graduated from Lake Superior State University and later attended Central Michigan University to obtain additional teaching credentials.

The bands gradually downsized. While he was in college or employed full-time, Dave had several versions of a duo, "Dave and..." that included bass players who could also harmonize, Dave Walters, Rob Benjamin and Tom

Savoie, plus an electric drummer. Finally, he performed locally as a single after adding electronic bass pedals to his inventory of instruments. This allowed him to play the guitar while singing or playing the harmonica with the electronics doing the rest.

His teaching positions included the Alternative High School and Sault Junior High teaching history, social studies and geography. The Alternative graduates selected Dave to be their commencement speaker. His address was delivered in the form of a song he wrote for the occasion entitled "Tenacity". The lyrics applauded the students' ability to stick to a goal and recognized the unique qualities of each of the graduates by name. Between his two teaching positions, he served as a youth employment counselor with the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).

Dave retired from Sault Area Schools in 1999. In retirement, he continued to perform and got a unique opportunity that led to a (largely unpaid) career in songwriting. Dave was a member of the Chippewa County Historical Society and was approached by fellow musician, Susan Askwith, to be part of a grant that emphasized writing original songs about the history of the Sault and performing them at area schools. The grant also provided funds to record a CD of 10 songs. The result of this endeavor was a CD, John Johnston, His Life and Times in the Fur Trade Era, which can be found on YouTube.

Thereafter for 11 years, Dave and Susan performed each summer at the Johnston Historic Home on Water Street.

They continued to write songs, expanding the area of interest to include shipwrecks and other historic events, such as the building of the Mackinac Bridge. Dave and Susan were invited to perform at the Michigan History Conference, the Ann Arbor Book Fair, Crossroads Village Festival, and performed their song, The Cypress, at a meeting of the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society which honored relatives of the 22 sailors who were lost in the sinking of that ship in 1907.

In retirement, Dave also continued to share his love of music by teaching guitar to young (and not-so-young) students. He and his wife, Jessica, were

active with the Best of Friends Humane Society and provided foster care for many dogs, puppies, cats and kittens until they could be adopted.

Dave is survived by his wife, Jessica (Benjamin), and they would have celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary in September. He is also survived by son, Jeffrey (Diana) Stanaway of Hendersonville, Tennessee; stepson Lindsey Lambert; siblings Brian (Mary), Dianne (Stan) Sipniewski, Bill (Chrissie) and Pamela (Bob Zajkowski); several nieces and nephews and second generations of them.

Dave was preceded in death by his parents; parents-in-law, Edmund and Nadiema (Vigeant) Benjamin; brother-in-law, Robert Benjamin; and several aunts, uncles and cousins of both the Stanaway and Gabriel branches of the family.

Per Dave's request, there are no services planned. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. Instead, please remember Dave with these lyrics to the song "Lullaby" from the John Johnston CD.

"Breathe deep, and let go now, your busy day is done; the air's been so clear in the bright autumn sun;

But here in the night, so cool and so deep, wrapped round in our caring, surrender to sleep.

Breathe deep and let go now, and bid not farewell; as you answer the call of life's passing bell,

Like the sands of an hour-glass, we pass in our time, gone but for the memories of music and rhyme.

You've done what you could, leave the rest in God's hand,

You can trust in the water, believe in the land.

Seasons have turned, friends we have known,

So breathe deep your blessings and let the world go."

Memorials may be directed to Best of Friends Humane Society, 149 E. 7 Mile Road, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783.

Family Life Funeral Homes assisted the family with arrangements.

Condolences may be left to the family at [www.familylifefh.com](http://www.familylifefh.com).

Obituary as submitted by family.

# Tribute Wall

MB

“ *This is Dave Walters's sister Mary Walters Bearden. My Dave was so fond of your Dave and spoke of him and their long relationship often. So sorry for your loss.*

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**Mary Bearden** - September 04, 2024 at 02:48 PM

TN

“ *From Tom Niedzielski: Jessica, I wish to extend our sincere condolences to you and your family for the loss of Dave in your life. You were always a very special soul. May God bless you. We will all miss Dave's talent.*

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**Tom Niedzielski** - September 03, 2024 at 12:13 PM

DB

“ *From KEN & DAR BAGBY: A long way back, Dave was gracious enough to write a song for Ken; "Ken Can." We'll always remember that moment with sincere love and appreciation for Dave's talent, not only for the humorous side, but also for the incredible musical things he personally shared with the community. He has a legacy that will live on in a special place in our hearts.*

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**DARLENE A BAGBY** - August 30, 2024 at 02:16 PM

JS

*I'll have to try to find the lyrics to that song. I had forgotten about it. Thanks for the memory*

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**Jessica Stanaway** - October 10, 2024 at 10:57 AM

WC

“ Jeff and Jessica, Bill, Pam, Brian and Dianne, all my love and heartfelt prayers. From 1989 when I met Jeff then his parents, to 1999 when I started working with Bill, getting to know all of you and becoming friends and "family" . So many memories, smiles and laughs. God's blessings on you all. Wendy Cardiff

Wendy Cardiff - August 30, 2024 at 11:17 AM

DS

Thank You Wendy! 💕💕

Dianne Sipniewski - September 02, 2024 at 02:29 AM

BH

“ Dave has brightened many peoples lives with his music and mild personality. Many great memories of Dave singing at the old Schoolcraft house. Thank you Dave for the memories.

Bill Hauptmann - August 30, 2024 at 11:02 AM

MG

“ love to see Dave in courtyard playing and singing. Dave will be dearly missed.

Mark and Janet Gillotte - August 28, 2024 at 09:30 PM

CS

“ I have known Dave since I was a young girl growing up on Swinton Street. He was one of the kindest, nicest and gentlest persons I've known. He will be deeply missed by all who had the pleasure of having him in their lives. My deepest condolences to Jessica, Jeff and family.

Cindy Scott - August 28, 2024 at 09:03 AM

JK

“ Denny and I are thinking of all of you as you mourn the loss of one so dear...We'll treasure our memories of Dave.

Jane Kennedy - August 27, 2024 at 01:42 PM

TW

“ Our heartfelt sympathies to Jess, Jeff and our Stanaway cousins and families, near and far. David was a quiet, gentle soul with many talents. We'll cherish those family musical get togethers in the Sault and Barbeau and fondly remember your visits in Ottawa.

Trish, John, Rachel, Caroline & Tasha

Trish Worgan - August 27, 2024 at 12:53 PM

DS

Thanks Trish! ❤️

Dianne Stanaway Sipniewski - October 06, 2024 at 01:31 PM

JG

“ For many years, I had the honor of playing with David at the Madrigal Dinner. It was a joy to hear him follow any tune that I could play on harmonica or Marxophone. He was a very talented and kind person and is greatly missed. RIP sweet man. Jim Grant

Jim Grant - August 27, 2024 at 09:47 AM

GF

“ Greg Myner and Family planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of David Chester Stanaway.

Greg Myner and Family - August 27, 2024 at 08:39 AM

GF

“ Greg Myner and Family purchased the Beautiful i  
n Blue for the family of David Chester Stanaway.



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**Greg Myner and Family** - August 27, 2024 at 08:39 AM

JC

“ Dave accomplished so much in his long life and gave joy to the  
many people who knew and heard him play and sing. He will always  
be remember as one of the best musicians to ever come out of the  
Soo. My condolences to all his friends and loved ones, Jim Cottle

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**Jim Cottle** - August 27, 2024 at 12:09 AM

PB

“ I was quite touched y the moving obituary of Dave. He lived his life  
to the fullest and we were proud to call Dave and Jessica our  
friends.

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**Phyllis Bigelow** - August 26, 2024 at 10:02 PM

LC

“ There was a band of brothers from the Southside of the Soo.  
Miraculously, we have been bonded lo these past 75 years or more,  
With the passing of Dave - now, two of us have gone on. We all are  
better men for having had Dave in our lives. It truly feels like we  
have lost our brother.  
If a finer cut of a man than Dave Stanaway ever existed - I've  
certainly never met him.  
Blessings to all that mourn him!  
Lynn Cook

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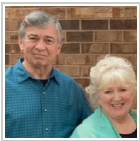
**lynn Cook** - August 26, 2024 at 08:46 PM

DB

“ Jessica and family, I am deeply saddened by Dave's passing. He was one of the kindest and most talented people I have ever known. I was enthralled by those programs at the John Johnston house with Susan. Our grandchildren still talk about the history they shared in song. The selection you have made to remember him by is also one of the songs favored by my wife Susan how preceded his death in June. At her Life Celebration in Cincinnati, many of our friends were touched by that piece of music. Over the years we so enjoyed the dances sponsored by the Sugar Island Historical Society and David's beautiful voice and skill on the guitar were central to that enjoyment. His talent displayed all genres. Ballads, Country, and Rock all got the Stanaway treatment. His guitar virtuosity was shared with drummer Donny Trainor when they performed WIPE OUT "Got the Joint Jumpin'. The times he and George Snider played at birthday parties they provided fond memories for all. Having been exactly in your shoes very recently, I know how empty you feel with his loss and I also know that he is now at rest and beyond the pain and suffering he experienced. I shall always value knowing him and cherish the best memories of his life and friendship. I know, sometimes it helps to have someone to talk to, so know that when needed I am here.  
Dave Bean

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David W Bean - August 26, 2024 at 07:58 PM



“ What a beautiful tribute in the obituary to a dear man who touched and blessed many people with his life, teaching, and music. May God give comfort and may Dave's music live forever here and on the other side. Bill and Gloria Rudd

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William Rudd - August 26, 2024 at 05:58 PM

HB

“ My husband and I knew Dave and Jessica when we both had babies in 1967-68. They were very special friends and we regret that we didn't keep up with each other except on Facebook. Our condolences to Jessica and family. We will keep you in our thoughts. Howard & Debby Belknap



Howard & Debby Belknap - August 26, 2024 at 05:29 PM

DS

Thanks Howard & Debby! I have very fond memories of the two of you at camp. I was so pleased when you guys became good friends with Dave & Jess after that summer.

Dianne Stanaway Sipniewski - October 06, 2024 at 01:49 PM

DG

“ Dave and Jessica were my clients and friends for 15 years. My sympathy goes out to Jessica in these hard times. God bless ..   


Dustin Goforth - August 26, 2024 at 04:49 PM

PA

“ So very, very sorry Jess and family. From Pat & Don & Family.

Pat - August 26, 2024 at 03:50 PM

JM

“ I always took my visiting friends to hear Dave and Susan sing at the Johnston House. I loved their take on UP history. My deepest sympathies go out to Jessica and family! Jeananne Mcleod

Jeananne Mcleod - August 26, 2024 at 03:42 PM

RP

“ To Dave’s Family:

*When I first found out about Dave’s death, I was shocked and saddened. However, as I had read through his obituary, I found that Dave led a full and wonderful life. Dave used to repair my guitars for me...and he was brilliant with this. I always enjoyed picking up my guitars because I used the time to have a chat with him about things (whatever was happening in the Sault at the time in the ‘music world’ and things like that). I always enjoyed and appreciated his truly patient demeanor. Now as a priest, I will be praying for him and his family. God gave us here on earth Dave as a truly talented musician, but also as a friend who was an excellent husband, father, brother and colleague to many. May he now rest from his labors in the Lord’s Kingdom. I wrote this on facebook and share it here now as it is one of the prayers of the Church: “Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him...Amen.” Sault Ste. Marie had lost many musician’s in the past few years. May Dave be now “jamming” with them in heaven!*

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**Rev. Ben Paris** - August 26, 2024 at 03:02 PM

TB

“ Dave was a long time friend and fellow.worker, we shared summer work together and he and his son once played at Bay Cliff for us.

*As a high schooler I remember hearing him play with his first band.*

*God's Speed*

*I will always remember your quiet laugh and smile.*

*Tim and Ann Bradley*

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**Tim Bradley** - August 26, 2024 at 02:31 PM

AP

“ Anne Pancheri Papineau lit a candle in memory of David Chester Stanaway



Anne Pancheri Papineau - August 26, 2024 at 10:56 AM

DS

Thank You! He is so missed! Dianne & Family

Dianne Stanaway Sipniewski - October 06, 2024 at 01:55 PM



“ Music is in the heavens forever



Darlene Lee Goldacker - August 26, 2024 at 10:42 AM

BP

Whenever you lose your best friend and the love of your life it is shocking and painful. Take each day a step at a time. We were both very lucky to have had time in our lives to spend with our wonderful husbands. Take care of yourself.  
Bonnie Payment

Bonnie Payment - August 28, 2024 at 11:31 AM

PC

*Jessica, Jeff, Brian, Billy, Diane, Pam and spouses: We e were so sorry to hear of Dave's passing. He was a long time friend and shirt-tale relative to the Champlin crew. He will be missed by many people far and wide. His talent was exceptional and he was so very happy to share it with anyone. Please know you are all in our thoughts and prayers. We know he is singing away on heaven with all those who went before him. Hugs  
Bruce and Patti Champlin*

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**Patti Champlin** - August 30, 2024 at 02:43 PM

TS

*Another seat taken at the Class of 62 table in heaven. Been in your shoes for four years now. So very sorry. Dave's music was part of a lot of very good memories. He was a good guy. Mg condolences to you and your family.  
Trudy Salo*

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**Trudy Salo** - September 06, 2024 at 02:58 PM

DS

*Thank You Patti & Bruce!*

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**Dianne Stanaway Sipniewski** - October 06, 2024 at 01:59 PM