

October 6, 2026

ROD MICHELL

The Kamloops Adult Learners Society is profoundly saddened by the death of Roderick Michell – longtime KALS instructor, student, and board member. In our 21-year history, few members have been more instrumental in our development than Rod.



He taught his first KALS course in January, 2009, shortly after retiring from the English and Modern Languages Department at Thompson Rivers University. In a 2024 interview, he recalled, “As KALS was a fledgling organization, I had little familiarity with its clientele and little actual sense of what might be of interest to its members.” Little did he know back in 2009 how keenly attuned he would become to the members’ interests. Over the years, he would not only follow but also shape those interests.

Rod taught over twenty literature courses: from Homer through Chaucer and Dante and all the way into the 20th Century, he developed courses that captivated students from a variety of backgrounds. Remarkably, one group spent 20 weeks on Dante’s *Inferno* alone. In that 2024 interview, he commented, “I find myself immensely proud of the intelligence, determination and tenacity of our small group of voyagers.”

In September of 2016, Rod expanded his teaching realm; he began his Come to the Concert series, which introduced the music of each concert in the current Kamloops Symphony season. As a board member and writer of programme notes for the KSO, he saw the series of courses as a “natural extension” of his work with music. This popular series reflected both Rod’s versatility as a teacher and his commitment to enhancing arts and culture in our community.

Somehow, Rod still found time to contribute to KALS as a student and board member. As a student, he made kind, positive, and encouraging contributions to class discussions. His transition from instructor to learner was seamless; he understood teaching and learning as two sides of the same coin. Rod’s thoughtful contributions to board meetings were informed by his understanding of the needs of members.

“People enjoy discovering that all this time they knew more than they thought they did. It is an important act of re-affirmation of their accumulated knowledge and wisdom, a kind of intellectual validation in later life,” Rod wrote, summarizing a philosophy that served countless members of the Kamloops Adult Learners Society supremely well. It is not surprising, given both his philosophy and his enormous commitment to KALS, that Roderick Michell was the recipient of the Margaret Cleaveley Award for English Literature Instruction in 2016 and an Honorary Lifetime Membership in 2018.

Our condolences go out to Rod’s children, Jessica and Julian, and to his many friends in the KSO, TRU, and KALS communities. We invite members to read the obituary composed by Rod’s family and to reflect on the stellar contributions of this fine man to our organization. We will sorely miss Rod Michell.

Roderick James Wheeler Michell ("Rod")

1942 – 2026

It is with profound sadness that we announce the sudden passing of Roderick James Wheeler Michell ("Rod") on September 25, 2026, at Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops, BC. Born on April 19, 1942, in Wellington, Somerset, England, Rod passed away with his children and longtime family friends by his side.

Educated at Brambletye and St Edward's School, Oxford, Rod earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in English Language and Literature from Christ Church, Oxford. Coming to Canada in 1963 on a Commonwealth Scholarship, he began his academic career as a charter faculty member at Selkirk College before moving with his family to Kamloops in 1970 to become a foundational faculty member of Cariboo College. Over a distinguished 40-year career in B.C. higher education, he taught generations of students, watched the campus evolve into Thompson Rivers University, and remained a cornerstone of the university community.

Rod was predeceased by his parents, Lt. Cdr. Kenneth Walter Michell and Nancy Manuka Michell; his brother, Cdr. Hugh Kenneth Perceval Michell; and Diane Alice Michell (née Orr), mother of his children, on April 10, 2026. He is lovingly remembered by his children, Jessica Nancy Michell and Julian Laurence Michell; his sister-in-law Anne; his nephews, James William Kenneth Michell and Jeremy Matthew George Michell; and dear lifelong friends in Kamloops and beyond.

Beyond the classroom, Rod's intellect and deep love of music enriched Kamloops for decades. A passionate volunteer, he authored program notes for the Kamloops Symphony Orchestra, developed and taught the "Come to the Concert" series for the Kamloops Adult Learners Society (KALS), and hosted on CFBX 92.5 FM for over twenty years. He served on the early board of Western Canada Theatre, supported the Kamloops Players and local art gallery, attended Met Opera broadcasts, and advocated for a new performing arts centre. At home, he found joy in his garden and in the loyal companionship of his two boxer dogs, Emma and Sophie. He will be remembered for his generous mentorship, curious mind, and devotion to literature, music, and learning.

A celebration of Rod's life will be announced at a later date. Simple floral tributes are welcome to honour a lifelong passion for gardens and nature, or memorial donations may be made to the Kamloops Symphony Orchestra, KALS, CFBX 92.5 FM, or a charity of choice.