



## Paul Andrew Daghlian

October 8, 1962 - March 3, 2024

Paul Andrew Daghlian, born 10-8-1962 at Lebanon, passed away 3/3/24 in his sleep at Bonaventure of Albany. He was the son of Andy and Joanne Daghlian. A longtime resident of Corvallis, he was a 1981 graduate of Crescent Valley High School and ran track for the Raiders. He attended Oregon State University.

Paul led a modest, non-consumptive life. No mountaintops were removed, nor forests leveled, to maintain his lifestyle.

He had a great love for the outdoors and the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, and Rocky Mountains. A deep feeling for the people of those regions. An encyclopedic knowledge of the mountains, rivers, and forests. Traveling with Paul was always a pleasure because of his passion for the flora, fauna, geology, history, and sociology of these regions. Paul enjoyed hiking, snowshoeing, camping, boating, swimming with family and friends. He could lose himself for hours by studying national park maps and reading a variety of books and articles about these topics.

He paved the way for his younger brother, Pat, in everything, from grade school through college, generously sharing friends, social events, and new outdoor experiences. They shared many fond, childhood memories. Both Paul and Pat had a close relationship with their grandmother, Ruth. They happily spent their holidays with their parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

In his final years, he dedicated much of his time and thought to caring for his parents. Near the end, given a diagnosis of inoperable lung cancer and just a few months to live, he faced down a monster with real courage.

Survived by parents Andy and Joanne, his brother Pat and his wife Maria, niece Lara at Cal Poly, Aunt Jean and cousins: Amy, Mike, Cindy, Gar and Janis, Bruce, Annie, Laurie Jo, Bob and Rick, and Patti.

Paul will be dearly missed by his family and friends.

Biblical verse: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. To everything a time to turn, turn, turn!

# Tribute Wall

“ Chapter 16: *The Entropy of a Man*  
By Pat Daghlia

*The morning after I graduated from Oregon State, I left home for California. It was an August day without a cloud. Mom and Dad were still the same parents that I grew up with, and my brother Paul was only a couple of years behind in his coursework at college.*

*My father was in the yard, mowing the lawn in straight, deliberate lines, as if the grass required grammatical precision. My mother stood in the driveway directing the men loading the moving van, efficient and composed, the way she had always managed a classroom. I pulled out before they were finished.*

*I remember the sun on the windshield of my new Chevy and the long stretch of road south. I drove alone toward my adult life.*

*They had both been teachers. Educated, articulate, and sensitive. Committed partners in a long, loving marriage at a time when that was no longer a constant. Fully aware of what dependency meant, having been caregivers to their elderly parents decades before. By their early nineties, they no longer spoke much about the future; language collapsed into the present tense and past.*

*When Paul was sixty-one, he became the full-time caregiver for our parents, both ninety-three. Our mother was a complete invalid in a nursing home—physically dependent on others for everything but still mentally sharp. Our father remained in the old family home, ambulatory enough to shuffle from room to room in the familiar geography of his life.*

*Paul became essential. He lifted them, bathed them, steadied them, managed their crises. It was exhausting work, but it gave him something he had never had before: a calling.*

*Paul had lived under the weight of depression for decades—long*

*shadows, long silences. But in caring for our parents, something in him came into focus. He found purpose where life had often denied him any. His redemption wasn't sudden; it was earned quietly, day after day, in the patient labor of keeping two elderly people alive.*

*Meanwhile, I was the successful son—married, Antioch homeowner, father of a young woman just beginning her post-college life. My daughter was stepping into adulthood, absorbed in her own world as she should be, but it marked a transition for me: I was being gently released from one role (father) just as I was being summoned back into another (son, brother).*

*Thirty years earlier at my wedding, we had played The Byrds' "Turn! Turn! Turn!"—the soundtrack of the 1960s generation, a song about seasons and change. It would return in a way I didn't expect.*

*The truth is, Paul and I lived in an uneven orbit. Not exactly Cain and Abel, but the shape was there: one brother close, bearing the burden; one brother distant, living his own life. Not heroes and villains—just asymmetry. Two men whose roles diverged.*

*And then Paul developed a cough.*

*By the time anyone understood it, the diagnosis was already stage 4a lung cancer. Six months. Paul—the one who carried our parents—was suddenly the one collapsing. And the two ninety-three-year-olds he supported were left floundering in shock.*

*At the same time, my own life had begun to fracture. At sixty, I was abruptly downsized from my position at Chevron—discarded after nearly four decades as if I were just another entry on a spreadsheet. I had just been diagnosed with diabetes. Overweight. Slowing down. Feeling entropy press in from all sides. I was no longer the man I thought I was.*

*When the call came that Paul was declining fast, I left my wife and my daughter—now a young professional busy living her own*

*beginning—and climbed into my old Silverado. Watching her rise while my brother fell was emotionally disorienting: one life expanding, one contracting, and me driving north between them.*

*The winter passes became my own trail of tears.*

*I cried for most of the twelve-hour drive north—deep, shaking sobs that came in waves I couldn't predict or stop. And yet, in some strange parallel way, the part of me that had spent decades being competent kept operating as if nothing were happening.*

*I stayed in my lane through the mountain passes. I kept the speed steady. I coaxed twenty-five miles per gallon out of an old Silverado that rarely saw twenty on its best day.*

*It wasn't rationality overcoming emotion. It was two different systems running at once: the man breaking down and the man who had spent a lifetime holding things together. They drove together through the dark.*

*I had no Bible, no bottle, no pastor waiting at the other end. What I had—my ridiculous, humiliating source of comfort—was a bottle of Imodium A.D. Lifelong companion to a fragile gut. Not an opiate for the soul, just for the colon.*

*It tells you everything: in the worst winter of my life, even my body was failing, and the only thing I could cling to was a seven-dollar anti-diarrheal. No God. No whiskey. No myths. Just that.*

*Snow.*

*Ice.*

*Loneliness.*

*The cab freezing despite the heater.*

*A family man traveling alone toward the end of his brother's life, rehearsing regrets in the darkness.*

*Near Corvallis, while cresting a long grade on Interstate 5, the Silverado's powerful 297-horsepower engine failed completely—catastrophic valve lifter collapse. The truck that had carried me for eleven years simply gave out. Machinery, health, employment, family—everything seemed to be failing in sequence.*

*I made it the rest of the way anyway.*

*Cancer is a monster, and Paul faced it with a courage few people ever show. Not loud bravery. Not movie bravery. The real kind—the kind where a man confronts pain without retreating into denial or rage. He endured the coughing, the choking, the drowning sensations, the terror-filled nights.*

*And then he asked the questions that come from the center of unraveling:*

*“Why me?”*

*“Wasn't I virtuous?”*

*“Why has God forsaken me?”*

*These weren't theological puzzles. They were the cries of a man who had finally found meaning, finally contributed something essential—and then was dragged toward the grave anyway. Abel dying first. Cain watching helplessly. The asymmetry felt ancient.*

*Morphine softened the pain, softened the fear, softened even the resentment. It didn't give him acceptance, but it gave him rest. Yet the photograph taken near the end told a different truth than any medical chart: his handsome face slackened into something that looked unmistakably like peace. Not triumph. Not acceptance. Just the soft physical release that comes when pain finally lets go.*

*Seeing that image later hit me like a suppressed memory—an intimacy both obscene and merciful.*

*And this is where the cowboy mythology died.*

*The Western fantasy of men “riding into the sunset,” of dying with their boots off, of facing death with stoic grace—none of it survived the reality of Paul’s final days. His death was medical, frightened, intimate, undignified. That entire mythology—raised on cinematic lies—shattered in the hospice room.*

*The real end of a man is not heroic; it is clinical, private, stripped of costume. All my life I had believed in a version of masculinity that promised a clean exit. My brother’s death exposed that lie without mercy.*

*Then came the second obscenity:*

*At the funeral home, a young man asking,  
“Embalming or cremation?”*

*As calmly as someone asking “paper or plastic.”*

*About my brother.*

*My warm, pink, living brother from just months earlier.*

*Now a checkbox.*

*We chose cremation. Not for symbolism. For necessity.*

*The funeral was held in a cavernous mortuary hall built for hundreds. Only four of us were there:*

- *My father*
- *Me*
- *Two of Paul’s childhood friends*

*My mother remained in the nursing home—mentally sharp, physically broken. The emptiness of the room was overwhelming.*

*And then the minister walked over to a silver boombox sitting on a folding chair and pressed Play. The speakers buzzed faintly, and into that vast, echoing hall came the thin, brave sound of The Byrds' "Turn! Turn! Turn!"—the same song from my wedding thirty years earlier.*

*It was humbling.*

*Awkward.*

*Perfect.*

*A different ceremony, same message:*

*A time to be born, and a time to die.*

*What began my married life now marked the end of my brother's. The cycle closed itself.*

*Later, my father moved like a man underwater. My mother absorbed the news without a sound.*

*And then came the final obscenity—one older than scripture and just as brutal. A rectangular wound cut into the Oregon soil. Gravel at the bottom. The urn lowered into the cavity like an object, not a life. Watching that reduction—man to matter to container to earth—was something my mind could register but not process.*

*The ritual was ancient, but the emotional reality was unendurable.*

*In the aftermath, Dad and I were confronted by the minimalism of Paul's possessions. No house, no wife, no children. A tiny, aging Subaru sedan. Leading his adult life in his childhood bedroom. One pair of boots, one cowboy hat, one winter coat, no TV. Almost an ascetic. Almost Christlike in his lack of worldly possessions.*

*Paul led a modest, non-consumptive life. No mountaintops were removed, nor forests leveled, to maintain his lifestyle.*

*And I left knowing that I had been the distant brother—the one who had lived for decades far away, the one with outward success—and that the one who struggled, the one who carried our parents, the one who stared down a monster, was the one now gone.*

*Death is not moral.  
It is thermodynamic.*

*Entropy unwinds everything we try to hold together.*

*But it was at that graveside that I finally understood the larger symmetry: the entropy that took Paul is the same entropy unraveling families, institutions, cities, civilizations. The collapse of a single human life and the slow collapse of a society are governed by the same arrow of time. Personal entropy is simply civilizational entropy rendered at human scale.*

*But entropy cannot touch what Paul built at the end.*

*He redeemed his life in caregiving.  
He faced cancer with rare courage.  
He used his last strength to lift those who could not lift themselves.*

*And I—the brother who arrived late, the brother still learning—am left to say his name, to carry his story, and to acknowledge the truth:*

*Sometimes Abel dies first.  
Sometimes Cain survives to write the elegy.  
And sometimes that is its own kind of grace.*

*The first time I saw Mount Shasta from Interstate 5, I was twenty-two and driving south from Corvallis toward Walnut Creek. It was mid-August 1987. The mountain was largely free of snow, rising abruptly from the landscape like Fuji or Kilimanjaro, solitary and immense. I was alone in my new Chevy. I glanced in the rearview mirror and caught a glimpse of my own face — clean-shaven, angular, not very different from high school. I recognized myself.*

*The most recent time I saw it from I-5, nearly four decades later, I was driving north in March 2024 to see my brother and my parents. Near Redding, about sixty miles distant again, Shasta stood white against the winter sky. Snow-covered. Severe. I was alone in my old Silverado. I glanced into the rearview mirror and did not recognize the gray in my beard or the heavier face staring back at me.*

*It was beautiful.*

*And it left me cold.*

*This, right now, on this keyboard at 2:25 AM, nearly two years later, is the postscript.*

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**Patrick Daghlian** - February 23 at 05:24 PM

SS

“ *One of my oldest friends. We grew up together and went to grade and middle school at Jefferson and Highland. Devastated to hear of his passing. I love you my brother-my friend.*

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**Stephen Di Stasio** - March 29, 2024 at 05:08 PM

HL

*I knew both Paul and Steve at Jefferson School and later at Highland View Junior High School and Crescent Valley High School. They were both very sweet boys and smart as whips. And they were nice to us girls--which not all little boys are at times!*

*I remember Paul as being good at math and that he had a way at Highland View of leaning over his desk looking interested in what was happening in class. I remember his mop of black hair and how trim he was.*

*I learned only recently that Paul had died from a nice retired mailman I know, Cary. I was very sorry to hear that we had lost Paul. Cary and I chatted about Paul. We had known him at different stages in his life--I knew Paul as a sweet-natured, bright little boy and Cary knew him as an affable adult who was a good, friendly neighbor and brave, uncomplaining person during illness. We agreed that Corvallis was lucky to have a person like Paul in our midst who cared about others and took an active interest in the world around him and our society.*

*I would like to add what a superb teacher his father, Andrew was at Highland View. Mr. Daghlian was a model of learned, skillful, caring instructor who was a master at making history and current events come alive and conveying to us that politics and history mattered and that they should be taken seriously. It was new to many of us as kids to be treated as future citizens who should do what we could to ensure that we contributed to our society and followed the news.*

*As a person with three older brothers, I liked the fact that Paul was so sweet and proud of his little brother Pat. It was fun to see them together at school.*

*I was not surprised to read here that Paul was renowned for his knowledge of maps and the natural world. He certainly struck me decades ago as a extremely intelligent, observant person. In class, he always seemed to know the answer!*

*All in all, a terrific guy and someone one fondly recalls from childhood and I was not at all surprised to read learn that he led a good and honorable life and looked after those he loved and who loved him.*

*I like the photo of him. It is like he is in heaven and saying.  
"Everything's great here--see you again someday!"*

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**Hope Leman** - January 16 at 07:58 AM