

Duncan Smith Tribute Game

By Catherine Mustafa, ACBL Unit 431 Communications

The room was packed and the energy electric as local bridge icon Duncan Smith entered the duplicate game at the Victoria Bridge Centre on October 8th, 2026.



Club Owner Mike Ainsley & Unit 431 President Ernie Tradewell



Tribute Speakers Jim McAvoy and Karen Turner

Despite a difficult brain surgery in his early 20s that left him with progressive mobility issues, Duncan persevered to become the quintessential bridge teacher, coach, national champion, and a gold-standard friend and partner.



Duncan's family Louise, Matt, Brenda

Born into a prominent bridge family (with his club-owner, math professor father and his brother, renowned Tournament Director, Matt Smith), Duncan earned the rank of **Life Master at just 21 years old**.

Shortly after, he forged a legendary partnership with local Grand Life Master, Jim McAvoy, that spanned more than 30 years. Their first big win was the NABC Flight C Open Pairs Championship in 1974. And then together, they secured a major victory at the Canadian National Team

Championships in 1993 and became a dominant force on the West Coast Regional circuit as the pair of choice for professional teams. They played on teams with such bridge greats as Jim Jacoby, Mike Lawrence, Grant Baze, and Mike Passell, capturing numerous regional tournament titles well into the 2000s. Duncan's lifelong dedication and love of the game ultimately culminated in achieving the ACBL's elite rank of **Grand Life Master** in 2009.





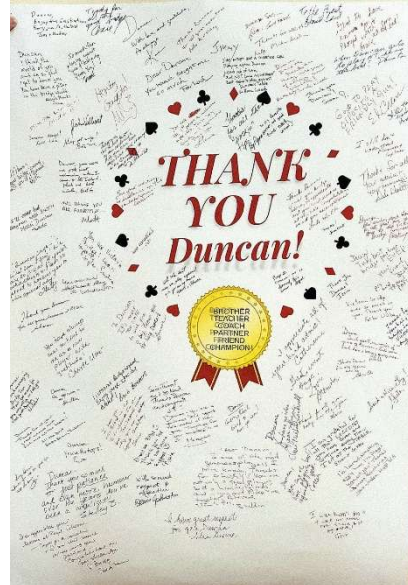
Beyond his national accolades, Duncan is the heartbeat of Victoria's bridge community. Few home-grown players have earned more admiration and respect from our local community. His legendary advice is still invoked at tables whenever a complex bidding debate arises; a simple phrase of "Duncan Says..." is usually all it

takes to resolve a dispute, with players nodding in universal agreement.

At the table, his calm demeanor and exceptional grace are always on display, whether he is praising an opponent's brilliant defense or offering gentle, encouraging guidance to a novice player.



Duncan with Mentor Ron Smith & Fellow Player Axie Millar



Unit 431 Community's Sentiments



Pizza, Cake and Bridge to Celebrate



VBC Teacher Debbie Wastle

As Mike Ainsley, owner of the Victoria Bridge Centre, perfectly summarized: "For the respect we have for Duncan, and for the respect he has always shown us, this game is our community's way of saying a heartfelt THANK YOU!"