

CARL'S OBITUARY

Carl Cramer
1946-2025

SOUTH PORTLAND--Carl Cramer, 78, of South Portland, Maine, died at Gosnell Memorial Hospice House in Scarborough, on April 10, 2025 with his wife Melissa Wood and dog Muttley at his side.

Carl was born on July 14, 1946, in Hollywood, California, to Elizabeth (Norris) and Ambrose C. Cramer. He grew up in Santa Barbara, moving to Maine to attend Bowdoin College in 1964. Excepting protracted adventures in Vietnam, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Nova Scotia, the rest of Carl's life was centered in Maine around boats and publishing offices.

Early careers included yacht designer, boatyard worker, bookstore owner, and during the record-breaking blizzard of 1978, the last taxi driver taking fares in Portland. In the 1980s he worked for *Downeast Magazine*, and then co-founded computer publications based in the mid-coast.

In 1987, after many years of sending his resume, Carl was hired to work at *WoodenBoat* magazine where he became publisher in 1989, a position he held until his retirement in 2014. During those decades, the Brooklin-based magazine and its associated school, shows, and other marine publications enterprises flourished in no small part because of Carl.

In 1989, he launched the trade journal *Professional BoatBuilder* magazine followed by the immensely successful International Boatbuilder's Exhibition and Conference. More pied piper than field marshal in command style, he was often in the background of his own achievements, lavishing credit on the people who brought his ideas to fruition. His work family returned the effort and the affection.

An enthusiastic sailor, Carl was passionate about boats. He delighted in a cockpit full of friends, talk, and sunshine. But Carl's true expertise was

people. He relished talking to strangers and made fast friends despite language and cultural barriers. Carl was also a pathological reader, who consumed multiple books every week, then passed them on to friends with pithy praise or condemnation.

In person, he was a fearless iconoclast and a gentleman. Carl loved to argue morality, literature, and naval architecture, but with a twinkle in his eye and a Heineken in hand. His formal attire was a suit paired with crocs. His manners were gracious. He always stood when a woman entered or retired from the room, and he eschewed trash talk. Carl remained gallant in an age when chivalry was long dead.

Carl often explained to waiters as he ordered an appetizer for dinner, “I’m just a little guy.” And he was. Indifferent to food, he appeared to derive all the nourishment to maintain his modest frame and fast pace from the company he kept. He was light and moved lightly through the world like a feather or a laugh lofted on the wind and gone.

He is survived by his wife; daughters Chloe (Doug Gurley) and Morgan (Eric Babcock); and grandchildren Quincy, Max, Sebastian and Isaac. Carl was predeceased by his siblings Kevin and Jill.

On Carl’s behalf, his family is buying coffee for the nurses at MaineHealth’s Cardio Thoracic ICU. Contact Melissa to contribute. A celebration of Carl’s life will be held in the summer.