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Remembered

## Remembered: Dan Wold kept laughing even after cancer wouldn't let him

Apr 26, 2019

Kelda Pharris



Dan Wold and his wife, Cheryl, in the background. American News file photo  
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The bright side knew Dan Wold well.

That's where he reveled — easily in good times, but also in trying times. He fought hard with humor and grace to help those around him. He was hit hard a few years ago, but the fight in him didn't waver. A rare cancer diagnosed in 2016 took his larynx and, on Aug. 16, 2018, his life. He was 51.

Those couple of years in between are what people speak about the most when Wold's name comes up. After his death, words of admiration peppered social media.

During those years, Wold grew adept at using an electrolarynx to speak.

"Dan was a very witty person. He was that person who always had a quick comeback. He liked to make people laugh," said his wife, Cheryl Wold.

Cancer took his laugh. It seemed a cruel addition of insult to injury for someone with a penchant for pulling the giggles and guffaws out of others. But there's no way cancer was going to stop him from expressing his delight, even if he couldn't in that primal way.

"He figured out a way to laugh. He'd just beep it a few times so you knew that was his new laughter," Wold said of the device he held up to his voice box to speak.

Dan Wold continued to counsel and coach students at Roncalli. He had a way with them and his colleagues that endeared him to just about everyone.

"I think the students loved him. Even from the time he started working here his humor was his thing," said Michala Heller, a former coworker at the school.

She spoke by phone in September, not long after Wold's death.

"(His humor) carried through his illness. When he would still speak, he was just kind of a joker. He liked to tease people just in daily conversation," she said.

When he addressed his illness at school he took an "Oh-darn-this-happened approach," Heller said.

"He had an optimistic way of looking at it," she said.

But Wold was also a human given a devastating diagnosis.

"He was sad at times," Cheryl Wold said. "This particular type of cancer, it was life-altering. You have to breath differently, learn to speak differently. He seemed to take it in stride."

His electronic voice box wouldn't allow the long-time swimmer his beloved exercise. But Wold was going to take as much pleasure from life as he could until he couldn't.

“He swam up until the night before his surgery. It was his last swim,” Cheryl Wold said.

That was Dan Wold with cancer. He wasn’t much different than before. He was always dedicated to people — helping them, guiding them, rooting for them.

“When Dan and I first got married, we were both teachers. We had the desire to help people. We were foster parents first, then had our own children — two wonderful children,” Cheryl Wold said. “He liked to laugh and enjoyed being around people. He loved little children. He’d get down on the floor and play with nieces and nephews.”

Their daughter, Julia Wold was in town with her mom as she spoke by phone. A son, Jordan Wold, is in Los Angeles. Cheryl Wold sees a lot of her husband in who the kids have become as adults.

“They both are pretty witty, they have his sense of humor,” she said, her voice lightening. “Dan had a strong sense of wanting to help people. They have an obligation to help people around them.”

Dan Wold was the youngest of five children and looked up to his siblings.


“He just loved, as a small child, following his older brothers. Seeing them play. A lot of family life revolved around sport. Athletics was a big part of his growing up,” Cheryl Wold said.

Dan Wold, the educator and coach at heart, will be remembered with a scholarship. The paperwork has been completed with the state, and donations will soon be accepted online via the website [DanielWoldFoundation.org](http://DanielWoldFoundation.org), which isn’t yet live. When it is, it will have an area for people to share their memories.

“We felt this is the best way to honor Dan by making a difference in the lives of others,” Cheryl Wold said.

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 Apr 24, 2019

### Daniel Wold, 51

- **Born:** Aug. 30, 1966, Watford City, N.D.
- **Died:** Aug. 16, 2018, Sioux Falls

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