

Eulogy for Richard Aubin by Charles Bélanger
November 26, 2022 at the IGA Tennis Stadium in Montreal

Good morning to everyone and my sincere condolences to the family. My name is Charles Bélanger and I am from Ottawa.

On November 11, my spouse and I were in Barcelona. We had determined that at 5 p.m. local time, we would gather for a few moments in honour of our great friend Richard. I will read you what I noted on my iPhone for this occasion:

Boarding for the last flight #1111 at 11:00 a.m. Ottawa time.

Destination: Unknown

Duration: Eternal

Flight Pilot: Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Aubin

We have been friends for about 20 years, while by chance, we became members of the same tennis club in Ottawa. He was the one who recruited me to be part of the team that represented the club and competed against the other clubs in Ottawa. As one of his partners told me, Richard embraced tennis as he embraced life, with both hands, with passion, determination, and an easy, contagious smile. When in the end his body had betrayed him, his life no longer existed.

Richard was very involved in the organization and maintenance of the tennis club as well as in the logistics of the National Bank's "Futures" tournaments in which future Canadian players (Raonic, Pospisil, Shapovalov, etc.) and foreign stars honed their craft.

Richard was not someone who liked to talk about himself and he kept that attitude until the end. However, when you had earned his trust, he was ready to go to war for you, unconditionally. Over the past few years, I have had many personal and intimate exchanges with him, to the point where I felt like I knew his career, his parents, siblings and children even though I had never met them, with the exception of Alex who attended the same school as our daughter Véronique. I had the privilege of hearing how proud he was of his children and grandchildren, of the joys that certain events had given him, and of the sadness that certain misunderstandings and situations had caused him.

We had some great moments together, such as descending the Ottawa River Falls in the spring, zip lining, indoor climbing, and working in the forest. He also was Santa Claus on the morning of December 25 with our amazed grandchildren who didn't really understand what was going on. Above all, he had a blast on the dance floor at social receptions of various kinds. He was an extraordinary dancer and always dressed like a fashion card.

We talked about how his last flight could turn out. He didn't know when it would take place but he knew how he was going to land. Those thoughts ran through his head at least two years in advance and he knew it would be a test of his courage as a pilot and father.

On a lighter note, one day I asked him if he was a believer, a bit to make him walk on eggshells, because he knew very well that this vocabulary was not part of my repertoire. Without wasting a second, he replied: "Of course, I think the Montreal Canadiens will make the playoffs every year." This retort demonstrated his love of hockey. In that same half-serious, half-playful conversation, I asked him if he was thinking of going straight to heaven. He replied: "I hope to go through purgatory because it will give me the chance to have a chat with Guy Lafleur, who according to his teammates was supposed to spend some time there."

Richard, your courage, boldness, loyalty, and professional and personal integrity will inspire us forever.

We will never forget you.

"Agman Primum Libertatis - In the vanguard of freedom" (motto of the Bagotville military base of which Richard was commander)