



Cary Andrew Rausch-Pennanen

June 2, 1985 - February 5, 2026

Cary Andrew Matthews-Pennanen was born to Michael and Catherine of Detroit, Michigan on June 2, 1985. He was the first of three children, with brother Neil and sister Daley joining in the following years. He was a precocious child, a voracious reader, and he knew he could quickly master new topics. His ability to acquire knowledge and a high level of self-confidence led to a natural skepticism toward authority that he would maintain throughout his life. In the late 1980s Michael, Catherine, and Cary moved from Detroit to a new home in Berkley, where Cary would spend the rest of his childhood and much of his adult life.

After graduating from Berkley High School in 2003, he set his sights on the wider world. After a few years of adventuring as a young adult, he became serious about a career in the automotive industry, and followed a job opportunity to Missouri. It was there he found love, meeting Katharina and her daughter Zoie. Katharina and Cary were married in 2016 and Cary adopted Zoie in 2018.

He had a sharp analytical mind and he was constantly seeking out new knowledge, new challenges, and new puzzles to solve. This curiosity, and a desire to better appreciate Katharina's background, drove him to develop a habit of taking time every day to practice German, her first language. When he died, his daily streak of language practice showed his dedication: he hadn't

missed a day in 4 years. He had a sense of adventure, sharing his love of outdoor pursuits like snowboarding, rock climbing, and mountain biking with family and friends. He was more comfortable sitting and ruminating in his own thoughts than most of us; he embraced opportunities to get fully immersed in a book, a knitting project, or a video game.

He was diagnosed with lung cancer in May, 2025. Cary is survived by his wife of nearly 10 years, Katharina, their daughter Zoie, his father Michael, brother Neil, and sister Daley. He is predeceased by his mother, Catherine. He was a loving father, a caring husband, a beloved brother and son. He will be sorely missed. Cary Rausch-Pennanen passed away at home on the evening of February 5, 2026 at 40 years of age.

A celebration of life will be scheduled in the spring or summer, 2026. In lieu of flowers or cards, memorials are appreciated to one of the following: National Parks Conservation Association, 777 6th Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001, or at <https://www.npca.org/>; EveryLibrary Institute, PO Box 406, 45 E. Burlington St., Riverside, IL 60546, or at <https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/>; Planned Parenthood of Michigan, Development Department, Planned Parenthood of Michigan, P.O. Box 3673, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 or at <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-michigan>; or WDET (Detroit's Public Radio Station), 4600 Cass Avenue, Detroit, MI 48201 or at <https://wdet.org/>. Please share a story or leave a tribute at www.SullivanFuneralDirectors.com

Tribute Wall

KC

“ I was shocked and saddened to learn of Cary's death. He and I were cross-country camp chaperones together in 2010; I suspect that everyone who was there remembers him well and fondly.

Kimery A Campbell - February 23 at 04:43 PM

KC

“ 1 file added to the album Shared pictures



Kimery A Campbell - February 23 at 04:41 PM

WS

“ So sorry to hear of Cary's passing. Enjoyed our few chats when he was out walking the dog or attending our daughters' softball games a few years ago. -The Savage Family on Beverly.

Will Savage - February 20 at 02:47 PM