

Stephen Charlier Pace

March 11, 1947 ~ September 21, 2023

Steve always knew when to leave a party, and he never overstayed his welcome. He is the greatest character many of us will ever meet, and the world feels strange without him since his passing on September 21, 2023.

Born in Boston, Massachusetts on March 11, 1947, Steve was the eldest child of William D. and Maxine Charlier Pace. The family later returned to SLC, and he spent his formative years in their home on Cottonwood Lane at the base of the Wasatch Mountains—a natural fit for this lover of nature. He attended Olympus High School, where he met many of his lifelong and closest friends, graduating in 1965. The city of his birth beckoned to him and he continued his studies at MIT, where he graduated with both a B.S. and an M.S in business. That discipline led him to a long and successful career in independent health care consulting for major hospital systems across the U.S. He loved to ski, run rivers, fish streams and lakes, camp, and create the most impossibly gourmet meals for hungry friends on river trips.

A Pisces, Steve lived for water. From river running to skiing to gardening to his daily swims, water was a primary focus of his life. His last day consisted of reading the news, taking a good nap and going water walking. When it came time to shuffle off his mortal coil, he was halfway through a lap in the pool. He had spent much of the past year planning river trips down the small creeks of southern Utah, and organizing restoration plans for his property in the Avenues. He was deeply connected to history and the experience of this place.

From a very young age, Steve loved to explore and learn, a quest that never ceased. He especially relished Emily's companionship with whom he shared his curiosity, wit and never-to-be-humble opinions.

A man of many mantras (“Make pain your friend!”), Steve was also a master of irony, teaching Emmer the most important lesson she could ever learn: The greatest weapon one can ever wield is an intelligent mind and a sharp tongue. He never hesitated to take up the pen to share his humorous, often pointed, observations about life, politics and government bureaucracy. Steve and Emily spent many “bisits” regaling one another with the tidbits they had learned that day, and what they were planning to discover next. They traveled many places together, but still had many more yet to visit; Emily and Mary Ellen will be taking up those adventures.

He is survived by his daughter (and best pal) Emily Sloan-Pace, and her mother, Mary Ellen Sloan, his long-time friend and former wife,—who (among many) will miss his warmth, humor, jokes and insights. They grieve him with each passing day and find that their three-way hugs feel most incomplete without his loving presence included in the circle. Steve is also survived by his brother Richard “Skitch” Pace (m. Katherine), his sister Patricia Barker (m. Paul) and his many (grand) nieces and (grand) nephews. He is preceded in death by his parents, his brother Daniel C. Pace, and his nephew Danny Pace.

At age 8, Emily scribbled a note in her summer school journal. Steve copied and posted it on a kitchen cabinet where it remained on display for the next 35 years. It is the best encapsulation of his ethos we could imagine:

“Today, we learned about space. I wish we could’ve learned more, but we ran out of time. I guess that’s the way life is.”

Our family will host a private memorial service in the Spring. We would love to collect your stories, photos, memories and bon mots about Pezo, Peach, Pace, Pa-poose and Evets E. Cap (his spy name revealed at last!). Please send them to Emily at Shakespeareprof@gmail.com or user031147@aol.com.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to Save Our Canyons and help stop the Little Cottonwood Canyon Gondola. Steve was dedicated to protecting the wildness and beauty of the Wasatch Mountains and Southern Utah, and passionately endeavored to save those treasured spaces that he and so many of us have enjoyed.

We also invite you to read Emily Wilson’s translation of The Iliad. Steve had been eagerly awaiting his copy, and poignantly, it was published just a few days following his death. During the early months of Covid, our socially distanced family read Homer's Odyssey aloud to one another; Dad immensely looked forward to gathering again to savor The Iliad. Please read a few pages out loud for Steve--and for all of us who loved him.