

David Mansfield Lutyens

Jan 9, 2024



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Ludlow, England

David Mansfield Lutyens passed away in his sleep on Nov. 30, 2023, in Ludlow, England, at age 97. He was born in the same country, where he attended Winchester College, a school to which he later returned as a teacher and which he always remembered with much fondness. David received high honors from Magdalene College of the University of Cambridge. He spent much of his early career in journalism, as a news anchor and science reporter for the BBC and ITV. His coverage of the space race in the 1960s (clips of which can be found online) exhibited his passion for both the technological and social aspects of space exploration. Despite the conventions of the time, his sense of humor also peeked through. Much of his professional life was dedicated to making elusive topics and genres — from the physics of television, about which he co-authored a book, to opera libretti — more accessible to students and life-long learners. He continued to explore complex topics well into his retirement, becoming particularly fascinated with the workings of the human brain.

In his spare time, David enjoyed spending time by the sea, particularly on Martha's Vineyard and the coast of Maine. He was a skilled sailor and took up windsurfing when it became popular in the 80s. His freshwater activities included canoeing and skating on the Concord River. In his later years, he took daily woods walks with his dog Anna, whom he once described as "as near a human companion as a dog can be." When indoors, he could often be found playing his 1895 Bluthner grand piano, which he shipped across the Atlantic five times over the course of his life. Although he forever remained a U.K. citizen, David spent the majority of his years in the U.S., 25 of them in Concord, Mass., and nearly 20 more in Blue Hill.

David was a father to three children, from the first two of his three marriages. Although he wasn't able to spend as much time with his son, Christopher Lutyens, and elder daughter, Lesley Lutyens, who lived primarily with their mother, he made the most of weekends and vacations together. And despite being 46 when his younger daughter, Miranda Lutyens, was born, he rarely missed a sports event or musical performance and always had the energy to explain a math homework problem (often disagreeing with the teacher's approach). As he grew older, David's hearing increasingly failed him; nevertheless, whether living hundreds or thousands of miles away, he always made an effort to stay in touch by phone, never failing to ask after his three grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by his whole family.

David's memorial service and service of remembrance will be held at St. Laurence's Church in Ludlow, where his mother and maternal grandparents worshipped. Both services, which will take place at a later date, are being arranged by his wife, Lucretia Grindle Lutyens.