

# Gustave Yaki

By Rudhav RS Sharma

Known for his immense knowledge of nature as a birder and naturalist Gustave Yaki also known as Gus Yaki was born 1932 August 19th.

Born and raised in Sandwith, Saskatchewan near North Battleford. Gus attributes his love for nature by daily 3 mile walks to school as a child. Inspired by a bird guide gifted to him by one of his teachers. He curiously used to read the descriptions and names of birds that would look similar to what he saw on his commutes.

Before moving to Calgary, he contributed in founding the Niagara nature club (NNC) in 1966. He helped in building the Bruce trail and was involved in amateur natural history and conservation of nature. During his endeavors he also sat on the Board of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists when the decision was made for a separate committee concerned on land conservation later known as the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC).

6 years after founding NCC Gus started his own eco-tour company Nature Travel Services offering guided trips to all around the world

He ran the business for 20 years, he visited all 7 continents and made the most of it. He eventually sold nature travel services but remained a professional tour leader till 2003. He also won the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers by the Governor General of Canada and was recognized as "7 over 70" in 2019. With his immense knowledge of nature he taught everyone he met.

He married Rae Jeanine Yaki and had two sisters Marry Anne Grant and Dorothy Pauline Gasper and had a son David Yaki. David Yaki states “ Letters from who met my father over the years have been flooding in,” and broke into tears while reading some of the letters.

Gus achieved many things in life but the most important thing that everyone shall know is teaching everyone in his life that came across him. With his amazing knowledge he inspired everyone to experience nature in a different way. He has deeply inspired me to feel nature while knowing some vital details about nature. Just like he put his whole life trying to conserve nature and teach us all. Thank you for sparking interest in our hearts for nature.

Just like he dedicated his life to teaching us and conserving nature, I will take action just like he did by help founding NNC and starting a class in my community named “Live Laugh Love Nature” which will start from May 27th 2024 to May 30 2024. This class will help children know what to do if they encounter any plants or critters that they are not aware of keeping them safe from danger. This will help their knowledge to grow and they might grow to be inspired by nature and its beauty.

Live laugh love nature will not have any fee as it is all conducted in the small garden right below the building where you can easily see some critters and plants. Obviously, safety is first so all the children will be protected with their parents \ guardians standing right beside them with a small first aid kit that they can take home too! There will be a variety of different items in the kit and allergen alerts with that too. All children will wear a protective

jacket (we will not provide those jackets). A few pairs of binoculars will be shared between the children and the classes will go on for half an hour.

Gus Yaki the man who inspired us all deserves to be an Alberta champion. We honor him as the hero he is.

<https://albertachampions.org/Champions/yaki-gus-1932-2020/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/gus-yaki-death-obit-tributes-naturalist-birding-birds-nature-calgary-1.5685090>

[https://albertawilderness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2014-gus-yaki-20141100\\_ar\\_wla\\_wwd\\_gyaki\\_bverbeek.pdf](https://albertawilderness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2014-gus-yaki-20141100_ar_wla_wwd_gyaki_bverbeek.pdf)