

Donald F. Dickey, attorney, mediator, former health policy analyst, skier, sailor, and father of three, died suddenly May 8 at his home in West Lebanon. He was 55.

Born in Oak Park, IL, on December 18, 1956, an “unexpected Christmas present” to his parents – Closey and Whit Dickey, today of Lebanon – he was raised in Illinois and Vermont. In the mid-1990s he came to the Upper Valley with his former wife, Landon Hall, to raise their then-young family.

Although dogged throughout much of his life by depression, his achievements were legion. A 1980 cum laude graduate of Yale and honors graduate of Boston Law School, he served as a legislative aide in Washington, later as an attorney with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Baltimore, and later still as a program officer for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in Princeton, NJ, where he developed and oversaw nationwide initiatives in healthcare. Upon his arrival in the Upper Valley 17 years ago, he directed, for two years, a start-up non-profit in Lyme – the Wellspring Cancer Help Program – before going on to serve for seven years as a policy analyst with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services in Concord. Between 2005 and 2009, he acted as policy analyst to the Vermont Legislature’s Healthcare Reform Commission.

In 2009, he earned his Master’s degree in Mediation and Applied Conflict Studies from The Woodbury School of Champlain College, and has since served as a mediator, trainer, and consultant to clients locally, as well as a member of the executive committee of the New England Association of Conflict Resolution. Most recently, he has given his time as a volunteer coach for the Second Wind Foundation in Vermont, dedicated to advancing the support and recovery from addiction and addictive behavior.

In addition, he has donated his time as a board member to Innisfree Cancer Help of New Hampshire, to the Upper Valley Hostel, the Vermont Community Justice Center, the Upper Valley Community Foundation, and several other local groups and boards.

However, he was never so happy as when sailing in Maine, skiing in Utah, or hiking the Upper Valley’s mountains and trails with friends and family. He was also a creative cook, a poet and guitarist, and a devoted practitioner of yoga and meditation.

He leaves behind a large circle of friends, many of them lifelong, including his beloved friend, Susan Goodwin of Wilder, VT. In addition, he is survived by his parents; his children: Alexander, Kelsey, and Charley Dickey, all in their twenties; four brothers: Whit of New York City, Lawrence of Seattle, WA, John of Hamilton, MA, and Colt of San Rafael, CA; and one sister, Clo Giffen of Anchorage, AL.

A memorial service will be held at 2 pm, Saturday, May 19, at the First Congregational Church in Lebanon. A reception will follow at his parent’s home in Lebanon. Directions will be provided at the church. In memory of Don and his love of the Upper Valley, donations may be made to the New Hampshire Charitable Trust.