

In Memoriam:

Gus Yaki August 19, 1932 – August 10, 2020



AWA Wilderness Defender Award Winner, Gustave Yaki passed away August 10, 2020. Gus would have been 88 on August 19th, 2020. He was diagnosed earlier this year with pancreatic cancer and deteriorated quickly. There are many fond AWA memories of Gus, times he spent helping others learn what he knew and inspiring others to care. Gus was the generous master and mentor, whether he was teaching at Kids' Camp Days, exploring Nose Hill with Brownies and Guides, or helping people of all ages and backgrounds find new experiences through observing and respecting nature. He led bio-blitz days with anyone who would like to learn and join him and documented the flora and fauna found on private and public lands throughout the province. In 2017, Gus celebrated Canada's 150th birthday by organizing and leading a walking tour across southern Alberta. From May 19th to June 22nd Gus guided

people from the Saskatchewan border to Waterton Lakes National Park. This incredible adventure brought renewed interest in the endangered species and habitats that lack protection in Alberta's grasslands (See Angela Waldie's account of this tour in the September 2017 issue of *Wild Lands Advocate*). On New Year's Day 2020, along with a few others, I spent a great day with Gus walking and counting birds and making observations of their behaviour in the woods. It has been an honour to count Gus as a friend. He is missed greatly and, thankfully, his legacy lives on in all of us who he inspired to care about nature. AWA is grateful and honoured for the kindness and caring he showed even in his dying days by making the request that, if his friends so desired, they could make donations in his memory to the Alberta Wilderness Association or the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

By Christyann Olson