



Simon B. Russell
September 1974 - December 2021

Simon Boyne Russell was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, the only child of Robert and Christine Russell. Though born in Canada, we can say his existence on this particular rock actually began in Australia. He then spent his first few months in utero tramping across Europe with his parents on their Eurail pass. The Russells then settled in Canada, where Simon was born on 06 September 1974. Later the family would live in several places in the US, including Tennessee, Seattle, Baltimore, and New York. Simon attended Calvert Hall College High School in Baltimore and graduated from the Northwood School in Lake Placid, NY in 1995.

In the Fall of 1995 Simon moved to Socorro, New Mexico to attend New Mexico Tech, majoring in Environmental Engineering. Most of us who knew Simon probably met him at a Techie party in Socorro in the mid or late 90's. At that time, a Techie party wasn't a party without Simon, and he rarely missed one.

Simon's passions included hockey and lacrosse, and while at NM Tech he convinced many of his friends to acquire lacrosse sticks of their own so they could "throw the ball around". He also convinced friends to take up rollerblading so the few Techies who played ice hockey would have more people to play street hockey with on the tennis courts. You have to create your own entertainment in Socorro. Simon was passionate about everything he did and exceptional at convincing others to "give it a try." If you were friends with Simon Russell, you always had something fun to do in Socorro.

In 1999 he transferred to the University of Arizona. In May 2002, he earned his Bachelor of Science in Geological Engineering, graduating Magna Cum Laude. Despite the transfer, he had accumulated enough credits while attending NMT to earn a degree, and in May 2003, Tech bequeathed upon him a Bachelor of Science in General Studies. In December 2012, Simon obtained a Master of Engineering, Mining, Geological and Geophysical Engineering degree, also from the University of Arizona, where his emphasis of study was mine management and mineral economics. During his studies he completed two undergraduate internships. One was at the Hydrology Bureau in the State Engineer's Office in Santa Fe, NM and the other was with the Hydrology Department at NM Tech in Socorro. His first job after graduating from the University of Arizona was environmental reclamation with MWH Global Inc. of the Old Dominion Mine in Globe, AZ. He lived on Six Shooter Canyon Trail in Globe and bought a dirt bike to explore the hills and surrounding desert. During his career Simon also worked at the Jerritt Canyon Mine (Elko, NV), the startup of the Ashdown Gold-Molybdenum Mine (Denio, NV), Summit Mine (Grant County, NM), the "Moly Mine" (Questa, NM), San Xavier Mine (Tucson, AZ), Stillwater Mine in Montana, and the Meikle Mine (Elko, NV). He has also been employed by All Points North Survey (Fairbanks, AK); Mineral Ridge JV (Silver Peak, NV); Tombstone Exploration Corp (Tombstone, AZ); Colorado

Goldfields Inc. (Denver, CO with travel to Silverton, Durango, & Zacatecas, Mexico); Mine Development Associates (Reno, NV); Diversified Development Corp (Glacier, WA); Thyssen Mine Contractors of Canada; Town Brothers (San Carlos Apache Reservation, AZ), and as an Exploration Geologist in Vancouver, BC. In December 2012 he started Flintstone Exploration LLC (Consulting Engineering and Investment Analysis). Although a serious car accident in May of 2014 severely altered his life and his career, he continued to be involved with consulting and his interests in mine investment analysis. Simon was a member of several professional organizations including, Society of Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration (SME); Society of Economic Geologists (SEG); Geological Society of Nevada (GSN); and Arizona Geological Society (AGS).

Simon loved mining. Like any miner/geologist, he had an extensive collection of rocks. He also had a library full of old and rare books on a wide range of topics about the minerals industry; including history, resource assessment, and the technical and economic aspects of the mining profession. Simon truly understood and appreciated how significant it was that the miners who came before his time did what they did with the tools they had to work with in their respective eras. He could see right through rock and he was right almost all the time. His viewpoints in his industry often went against the status quo, Simon respected the miners more than he respected the money. He had the right ideas, the mining world just wasn't ready for him.

Simon had that miner-49er spirit that many of us share. He had been to many places that most people have never heard of, and many ghost towns no longer on the map. He felt he was born about 100 years too late, and if it was up to Simon we would all still be riding horses and sending smoke signals. He seemed happiest when he was riding four wheelers across the Nevada desert looking for lithium, in remote places blowing shit up, or just digging for gold. He was one of the most generous people ever - always offering the best of the best of whatever he had to make you feel welcome. He'd insist that you stay awhile and take a load off...and with Simon it was usually more than just a little while ("Uno mas...por some more!").

Simon was one of the most hospitable people anyone could ever have encountered, and that never changed from the first day any of us met him, right up until his final resting day. One could always count on a couch to crash on at Simon's place. A guest in Simon's house never left weary nor hungry, despite their condition when they arrived. His door was always open, if you could find it - as he always managed to find a place to live that was just off the beaten path (both literally and figuratively). He even managed to find seclusion in the heart of Taos.

He was always up for a road trip and a good soak in desert hot springs. The long conversation over shared meals and taking the backroads (no matter how frightening!) will be missed. Simon touched so many people in so many ways. His kindness and open heart, contagious smile, and laughter reached even the most introverted people. He loved to talk, but equally loved to sit in silence.

Simon will always be remembered with a smile, a tie-dyed Grateful Dead shirt, and his “Gentle Ben” demeanor. Many of us were brought together as friends through Simon and now we’ve been brought that much closer, also because of Simon. We must (and will) forever celebrate Simon’s memory with our mutual friends, laughing about the good times we had, and creating new ones. He will be in our hearts forever.

Sometimes we would go months, sometimes years, without much contact (it wasn’t easy when he was off in one of those remote places, or out of the country altogether. How do you send a Christmas card to the “white pick-em-up truck with Nevada plates”?). Then one day out of the blue-clear sky, with one phone call we could pick up where we left off as if no time had passed at all. Simon was a free spirit and an honest, true friend. Carpe diem little buddy... mañana.

Simon passed peacefully in his sleep on 29 December 2021 at his home in Taos. He was preceded in death by his mother Christine. He is survived by his father Robert, his ever-faithful canine companion Bo, and many, many friends and loved ones who will miss him greatly and remember him dearly.

Rest in ‘tranquilo’ amigo.

Gifts honoring Simon's memory may be made to Cancer Foundation for New Mexico (<https://cffnm.org/>) or Kitchen Angels (<https://kitchenangels.org/>).

If you would like to share a memory of Simon Russell, please feel free to send an email to rebecca.clemens@nmt.edu, or a written message to Rebecca Clemens, Advancement, 801 Leroy Place, Socorro, NM 87801. Your memory will be forwarded to Simon's friends and family.

(Contributions to this article were made by Robert Russell, Patti Dorn, Mason Hutchison, Javier Martinez, Ben Gunderson, Shannon Kelly, and Edie Castañeda)