

PASSING OF A DUNGEON MASTER

Dungeons and Dragons' co-creator Gary Gygax 1938-2008

Tabletop gaming legend Gary Gygax passes away after a long battle with illness, leaving 'Dungeons and Dragons' fans everywhere mourning

Nick Kornafel

The Clackamas Print

On Tuesday, March 4, the gaming community suffered a great loss with the death of Ernest Gary Gygax, co-creator of the widely popular role-playing game "Dungeons and Dragons," commonly known as "D&D."

Born July 27, 1938, in Chicago, Gygax was drawn to gaming at a young age when he started playing chess and pinochle. It was later in life that he started to explore fantasy literature, particularly the works of American pulp writer Robert E. Howard and author H.P. Lovecraft.

In 1953 he got his first taste of miniature gaming with the tabletop wargame "Gettysburg," a re-enactment of the Battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War. The game sparked his imagination and inspired him to generate different scenarios of play. This led to the predecessor of "D&D," "Chainmail," a miniatures wargame set in medieval times, in 1971.

Gygax, along with his friend Don Kay, co-

founded the Tactical Rules Study (TSR) two years later. The company published the first-ever version of "D&D," which was an instant hit.

Aside from "D&D," Gygax has created a number of board games, such as "Dragon Chess" - a multilayered variant of the original game - "Alexander the Great," "Baku" and "Little Big Horn." He is also the author of numerous fantasy novels, including the "Greyhawk Adventures" and the "Gord the Rogue" series.

Even as his health deteriorated, gaming was a large part of his life.

Gygax nearly suffered a heart attack after being mismedicated to prevent strokes. He died of an inoperable abdominal aortic aneurysm.

"His doctor miscast heal," said student Andrew Stanchfield.

Students and role-playing gamers at Clackamas have been affected by Gygax's death. The general response is a very ardent one that is most easily understood by "D&D" enthusiasts.

"Everyone loses 2d6 happiness points," Ted Johnson said.

Dustin Harding remarked, "Everyone must make a DC 20 Will save or start crying."

Tristan Harris' reaction to the news was particularly animated.

"What?! What?! No!" Harris exclaimed. "Now my Lv.23 Hill-Giant is going to go on a berserk rampage!"

Events in honor of Gygax's legacy are already being planned by members of the gaming community. According to the Amtgard

Kingdom of Blackspire online message board, a tournament or quest-based event will soon be held in his honor.

Gamers everywhere will mourn the loss of the man who many considered one of the fathers of the role-playing game. Gygax, however, in a 2004 interview with gaming Web site GameSpy, requested that he be memorialized in more humble terms:

"I would like the world to remember me as the guy who really enjoyed playing games and sharing his knowledge and his fun pastimes with everybody else."

"What?! What?! No! Now my Lv.23 Hill-Giant is going to go on a berserk rampage."

Tristan Harris
Student

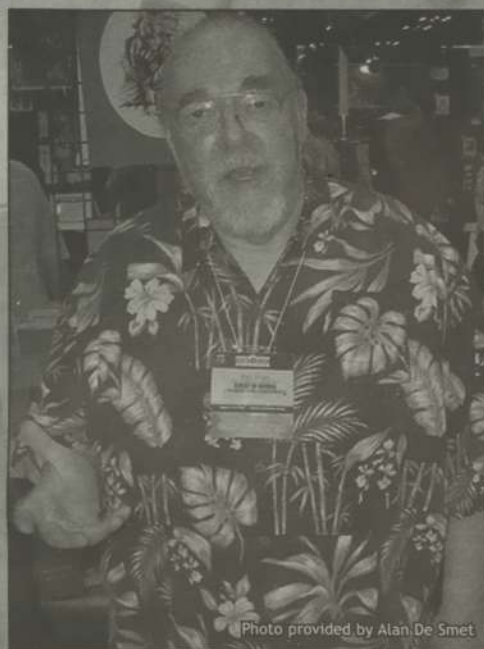


Photo provided by Alan De Smet

GYGAX

GYGAX AND 'D&D' TIMELINE

- 1938 - Born July 27.
- 1953 - Takes an interest in miniature games; began playing with numbers and dice.
- 1966 - Helps to create "The International Federation of Wargamers."
- 1968 - Organizes a 20-person gaming meet in the basement of his home. This is the birth of the annual Gen Con gaming convention.
- 1971 - Gygax and Jeff Perren write "Chainmail," a miniatures wargame that later develops into the famous game "Dungeons & Dragons."
- 1973 - Gygax and Don Kaye founded the publishing company Tactical Studies Rules.
- 1974 - First version of "Dungeons & Dragons" published.
- Gygax takes over magazine *The Strategic Review* and turns it into the fantasy periodical *The Dragon*.
- 1976 - Kaye dies, his widow sells her shares to Gygax. He creates TSR Hobbies, Inc.
- 1977 - New version of "D&D" leads to "Advanced Dungeons & Dragons." First book the *Monster Manual* is the new rule book.
- 1985 - Gygax leaves TSR during changes in management. This occurs at the same time as the cartoon named after "D&D."
- 1987 - Marries Gail Carpenter.
- 1999 - Gygax's creation "Lejendary Adventure" released as a computer game.
- 2005 - Gygax returns to the "D&D" game by helping to create the "Castles & Crusades" system with Troll Lord Games.
- 2007 - Gygax appears as a special guest on "Code Monkeys," a G4TV show.
- 2008 - Dies in his home.