



Daniel Ulf Nilsson

March 18, 1979 - February 4, 2016

Daniel Ulf Nilsson, extraordinary chef/father/husband/brother/son/friend/athlete/artist, left this world on February 4, 2016, at the age of 36. In his too short life, Daniel pushed the boundaries in all his endeavors, inspiring us all with his generosity, intensity, and love of life. The son of Ulf Nilsson and Barbro de Neree, Daniel lived for a year in his parents' native Sweden after graduating from high school in Westport, Connecticut. There he worked at a sushi restaurant and nursery school, and reconnected with his childhood friend Ola Svedman. Taking his lifelong love of food into serious consideration, Daniel then studied at the Florida Culinary Institute in West Palm Beach, FL. After graduation he tried his hand at property management in Manhattan and lived with his sister Anna, her husband Giora, and their son Matti, his roommate for two years. In 2005, Daniel moved to Hudson, and at age 26 bought a building on lower Warren Street, investing in a city where he came to cut a broad swath with friends too numerous to count. With Barbro as his business partner, and Chef Ola at his side, Daniel created DABA, serving New-American food with a Scandinavian influence. The idea was to put forth beautiful and amazing food while giving everybody a good time. A few days before he passed on, Daniel remarked that he just wanted to give a dinner party - every night. Daniel's hospitality was both generous and disciplined. He fed people off the back porch and announced free food on Facebook often, all while attending to every detail: the napkins folded, the stage set, and the servers trained to inquire about the food in just the right way. And he left beauty everywhere he went, such as the painted sidewalk in front of DABA or the work he displayed by artist friends. In 2010, Daniel married Ariana-Theodora Elizabeth Carlson, from Great Barrington, MA, and together Daniel and Ari created three beautiful children: Lars Magnus, Evangeline Bee, and Felix Ulf. Daniel and the family were a welcome presence, often found walking on Warren Street. Daniel excelled at friendship as at fatherhood, never letting go of his friends from Westport or Scarsdale, NY, where he lived until he was a high school junior. He fostered camaraderie instead of competition in his widespread community of culinary peers. He excelled as well as an athlete, his daring and exuberant nature evident in the risks he took sky-diving, snow-boarding and motorcycling. In the past few years his extreme sport was CrossFit, where he inspired the daily 10 AM class at his gym with his incredible drive and feats of strength. Daniel loved to say that

there are 168 hours in the week and we all have choices in how we use them. He chose to use those hours to make the world a better and more beautiful place, and to support and encourage his fellow chefs, his friends, his family, and anyone fortunate enough to come his way. Daniel is mourned by his loving wife Ariana, their children Lars, Bee, and Felix, his mother and stepfather Barbro and Emile de Neree of Stamford, CT, his father and stepmother Ulf and Gun Nilsson of Stockholm, Sweden, his sister and nephew Anna and Matti Rachminov of Claverack, NY, his brother Mikael Nilsson of South Norwalk, CT, mother-in-law Angela Carlson of Great Barrington, as well as step-brothers Philippe and Marc de Neree, in-laws Rose and Matt Blodgett, Galen Carlson, and Damon Carlson, as well as a large extended family in Sweden.

Patricia McKenna

Columbia Greene Media

1 Hudson City Centre

Suite 202

Tribute Wall

JE

“ It's March of 2026 and his legacy still lives on. What a kind and humble man. I don't remember the winner, I remember him. He is not forgotten.

Jennifer - March 26 at 11:19 PM



“ I just got done watching Guy's Grocery Games and was touched by what a kind and selfless person Daniel was and wanted to see how his restaurant was doing. I was shocked and saddened to have learned about his passing. It made me cry. I don't understand why the good people have to leave so soon. I hope his family, especially his children can know that even strangers who only saw him on a tv screen, felt the impact of his goodness, and that it's too bad there aren't more people in the world like him.

Gabrielle Simmons - September 18, 2022 at 11:09 PM

DD

We also were curious about Daniel because of watching GGG, and were deeply saddened to learn of his passing. It made us cry as well.

Dominic D - January 30, 2024 at 09:09 PM

SM

I was watching GGG from the early years and would say the same as others who have commented. He was so awesome that I wanted see if his restaurant was still operating. So sad that he passed. To the family: his compassion and consideration is STILL living in his example over all these years. It is Sept 28, 2025 and I was so moved by his story that I wanted to know how his family was doing. Blessings to his whole family.

Susan A Mathis - September 29, 2025 at 12:53 AM

ID

“ I just saw the season 2 episode 9 of Guy's Grocery Games where Chef Daniel shone so bright, radiating kindness and class, and was hoping to read more about his restaurant and career.
I am so saddened to learn he is gone. The world is surely less bright without him. To his family and all those who knew him and loved him, I am so deeply sorry for his loss. He so impressed me in those few minutes I saw him. I know I'm just a stranger writing words on an internet wall today, but I'm sending you love.

Impressed by Chef Daneil - April 11, 2022 at 09:39 PM

WR

“ *I just watched the episode of Guy's Grocery Games with Chef Daniel and his kindness and selflessness was like that I've never seen before.*

Will Rawlings - February 28, 2021 at 10:04 PM

SU

“ *My condolences to the family of Daniel and anyone who is feeling loss after knowing him. I was so amazed, deeply touched and inspired by his obvious greatness and one-of-a-kind honorability when just seeing him play on Guy's Grocery Games. His pursuit of fairness and valuing of meritocracy just really showed what incredible "stuff" this human being was about. For so long, I've considered meritocracy an antidote to any -ism (racism, sexism, age-ism, sexual- or gender-orientation discrimination, discrimination against those differently-bodied or -abled). After such a painful year, with such a heightened need for wayshowers and beacons of light amidst so much lies, toxic murkiness and muck brought to light, it was unbelievably moving and inspiring to see someone show such rare leadership and honorability. I am so sorry for your loss.*

susan - December 05, 2020 at 06:51 PM

SA

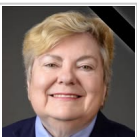
“ *As Ms. Pfersick's comment of 5 months ago, I also looked for info on Mr. Nilsson, as I had just seen an old 'Guy's Grocery Games', where he selflessly helped another contestant. What a terrible shame. Belatedly, so sorry for his loss, and sympathy for his family and friends.*

Sally - December 05, 2020 at 02:10 PM

AD

I, too, looked up Daniel to find his restaurant to find out how many people came after his selfless act on GGG only to be shocked and saddened by such news. I hope all three of his kids saw that GGG episode and keep watching it to remind themselves how important it is to help others, even in the heat of competition.

Aimee Dawson - April 02, 2021 at 09:50 AM



“ *I looked up Daniel's name to find out where his restaurant was so could visit. Can not believe I read that he is gone. I am so so so sorry.*

Diana Pfersick - July 19, 2020 at 05:04 PM



Same...I'm in shock

Bob Kennedy - December 05, 2020 at 02:41 PM