Gary Gygax

Ernest Gary Gygax (/ ??a??æks / GY @-@ gaks) (July 27 , 1938 ? March 4 , 2008) was an American game designer and author best known for co @-@ creating with Dave Arneson the pioneering role @-@ playing game Dungeons & Dragons (D & D) . Gygax has been described as the father of D & D.

In the 1960s , Gygax created an organization of wargaming clubs and founded the Gen Con gaming convention . In 1971 , he helped develop Chainmail , a miniatures wargame based on medieval warfare . He co @-@ founded the company Tactical Studies Rules (TSR , Inc .) with childhood friend Don Kaye in 1973 . The following year , he and Arneson created D & D , which expanded on Gygax 's Chainmail and included elements of the fantasy stories he loved as a child . In the same year , he founded The Dragon , a magazine based around the new game . In 1977 , Gygax began work on a more comprehensive version of the game , called Advanced Dungeons & Dragons . Gygax designed numerous manuals for the game system , as well as several pre @-@ packaged adventures called " modules " that gave a person running a D & D game (the " Dungeon Master ") a rough script and ideas on how to run a particular gaming scenario . In 1983 , he worked to license the D & D product line into the successful D & D cartoon series .

After leaving TSR in 1985 over issues with its new majority owner , Gygax continued to create role @-@ playing game titles independently , beginning with the multi @-@ genre Dangerous Journeys in 1992 . He designed another gaming system called Lejendary Adventure , released in 1999 . In 2005 , Gygax was involved in the Castles & Crusades role @-@ playing game , which was conceived as a hybrid between the third edition of D & D and the original version of the game conceived by Gygax .

Gygax was married twice and had six children . In 2004 , Gygax suffered two strokes , narrowly avoided a subsequent heart attack , and was then diagnosed with an abdominal aortic aneurysm , from which he died in March 2008 .

Early life and inspiration

Gary Gygax was born in Chicago near Wrigley Field on July 27 , 1938 . He was the son of Almina Emelie (Burdick) and Swiss immigrant and Chicago Symphony Orchestra violinist Ernst Gygax . Gygax spent his early childhood in Chicago , but in 1946 he was involved in a brawl with a large group of boys , and his father decided to move the family to Lake Geneva , Wisconsin , where Gary 's mother 's family had settled in the early 19th century .

During his childhood and teen years , he developed a love of games and an appreciation for fantasy and science fiction literature . When he was five , he played card games such as pinochle and then board games such as chess . At the age of ten , he and his friends played the sort of games that eventually came to be called " live action role @-@ playing games " with one of them acting as a referee . His father introduced him to science fiction and fantasy through pulp novels . His interest in games , combined with an appreciation of history , eventually led Gygax to begin playing miniature war games in 1953 with his best friend Don Kaye . As teenagers Gygax and Kaye designed their own miniatures rules for toy soldiers with a large collection of 54 mm and 70 mm figures , where they used " ladyfingers " (small firecrackers) to simulate explosions .

Gygax dropped out of high school in his junior year and worked at odd jobs for a while , but he moved back to Chicago at age 19 to attend night classes in junior college . He also took anthropology classes at University of Chicago . The following year he married Mary Jo Powell . Their marriage produced five children : Ernest (" Ernie ") , Lucion (" Luke ") , Heidi , Cindy , and Elise . Gygax continued his night @-@ school classes and made the college Dean 's List . At the urging of his professors , he applied to the University of Chicago and was admitted . However , because he was married , he decided to take a full @-@ time job in insurance instead .

By December 1958 , the game Gettysburg from the Avalon Hill company had particularly captured Gygax 's attention . It was also from Avalon Hill that he ordered the first blank hexagon mapping sheets that were available , which he then employed to design his own games . Gygax became

active in fandom and became involved in play @-@ by @-@ mail Diplomacy games , for which he designed his own variants . By 1966 he was active in the wargame hobby and was writing many magazine articles on the subject . Gygax learned about H. G. Wells ' Little Wars book for play of military miniatures wargames and Fletcher Pratt 's Naval Wargame book . Gygax later looked for innovative ways to generate random numbers , and he used not only common , six @-@ sided dice , but dice of all five platonic solid shapes , which he discovered in a school supply catalog .
 In 1967 , he and his family moved back to Lake Geneva . Except for a few months he would spend in Clinton , Wisconsin , following his divorce , and his time in Hollywood while he was the head of TSR 's entertainment division , Lake Geneva would be his home for the rest of his life .

= = Wargames = =

 During the 1960s , Gygax worked as an insurance underwriter for the Firemen 's Fund in Chicago . In 1967 , Gygax co @-@ founded the International Federation of Wargamers (IFW) with Bill Speer and Scott Duncan . The IFW grew rapidly , especially by assimilating several pre @-@ existing wargaming clubs , and aimed to promote interest in wargames of all periods . It provided a forum for wargamers , via its newsletters and societies , which enabled them to form local groups and share rules . In 1967 , Gygax organized a 20 @-@ person gaming meet in the basement of his home ; this event would later be referred to as " Gen Con 0 " . In 1968 , Gygax rented Lake Geneva 's vine @-@ covered Horticultural Hall for US $ 50 to hold the first Lake Geneva Convention , also known as the Gen Con gaming convention for short . Gen Con is now one of North America 's largest annual hobby @-@ game gatherings . Gygax met Dave Arneson , the future co @-@ creator of D & D , at the second Gen Con in August 1969 .