

= Dave Arneson =

David Lance " Dave " Arneson (October 1 , 1947 ? April 7 , 2009) was an American game designer best known for co @-@ developing the first published role @-@ playing game (RPG) , Dungeons & Dragons , with Gary Gygax , in the early 1970s . Arneson 's early work was fundamental to the development of the genre , developing the concept of the RPG using devices now considered to be archetypical , such as adventuring in " dungeons " , using a neutral judge , and having conversations with imaginary characters to develop the storyline .

Arneson discovered wargaming as a teenager in the 1960s , and began combining these games with the concept of role @-@ playing . He was a University of Minnesota student when he met Gygax at the Gen Con gaming convention in the late 1960s . In 1970 Arneson created the game and fictional world that became Blackmoor , writing his own rules and basing the setting on medieval fantasy elements . Arneson showed the game to Gygax the following year , and the pair co @-@ developed a set of rules that became Dungeons & Dragons (D & D) . Gygax subsequently founded TSR , Inc. to publish the game in 1974 . Arneson worked briefly for the company .

Arneson left TSR in 1976 , and filed suit in 1979 to retain credits and royalties on the game . He continued to work as an independent game designer , briefly worked for TSR again in the 1980s , and continued to play games for his entire life . Arneson also did some work in computer programming , and taught computer game design and game rules design at Full Sail University from the 1990s until shortly before his death in 2009 .

= = Experience with miniature wargaming = =

Arneson 's role @-@ playing game design work grew from his interest in wargames . His parents bought him the board wargame Gettysburg by Avalon Hill in the early 1960s . After Arneson taught his friends how to play , the group began to design their own games and tried out new ways to play existing games . Arneson was especially fond of naval wargames . Exposure to role @-@ playing influenced his later game designs . In college history classes he role @-@ played historical events , and preferred to deviate from recorded history in a manner similar to " what if " scenarios recreated in wargames .

In the late 1960s Arneson joined the Midwest Military Simulation Association (MMSA) , a group of miniature wargamers and military figurine collectors in the Minneapolis @-@ St. Paul area that included among its ranks future game designer David Wesely . Wesely asserts that it was during the Braunstein games he created and refereed , and in which other MMSA members participated , that Arneson helped develop the foundations of modern role @-@ playing games on a 1 : 1 scale basis by focusing on non @-@ combat objectives ? a step away from wargaming towards the more individual play and varied challenges of later RPGs . Arneson was a participant in Wesely 's wargame scenarios , and as Arneson continued to run his own scenarios he eventually expanded them to include ideas from The Lord of the Rings and Dark Shadows . Arneson took over the Braunsteins when Wesely was drafted into the Army , and often ran them in different eras with different settings . Arneson had also become a member of the International Federation of Wargamers by this time .

In 1969 Arneson was a history student at the University of Minnesota and working part @-@ time as a security guard . He attended the second Gen Con gaming convention in August 1969 (at which time wargaming was still the primary focus) and it was at this event that he met Gary Gygax , who had founded the Castle & Crusade Society within the International Federation of Wargamers in the 1960s at Lake Geneva , Wisconsin , not far from Arneson 's home in Minnesota . Arneson and Gygax also shared an interest in sailing ship games and they co @-@ authored the Don 't Give Up The Ship ! naval battle rules , serialized from June 1971 and later published as a single volume in 1972 by Guidon Games with a revised edition by TSR , Inc. in 1975 .

= = Blackmoor = =

Following the departure of David Wesely to armed service duty in October 1970 , Arneson began to imagine a medieval fantasy style Braunstein wherein the players explored the dungeons of a castle inhabited by fantastic monsters . Arneson adjusted his Braunsteins to allow players to play themselves in the Barony of Blackmoor , where they would escort caravans , fight against the forces of evil , and delve into the sewers beneath Castle Blackmoor - which originated in a plastic kit that Arneson had of a Sicilian castle . Originally Arneson played his own mix of rules and used rock , paper , scissors to resolve combat , but later adapted elements from his naval wargame rules which had an armor class system like that later used in D & D . " I had spent the previous two days watching about five monster movies on channel 5 ? s ' Creature Feature ' weekend , reading several Conan books (I cannot recall which ones , but I always thought they were all pretty much the same) , and stuffing myself with popcorn , doodling on a piece of graph paper . At the time , I was quite tired of my Nappy (Napoleonic) campaign with all its rigid rules and was rebelling against it . " The Fantasy combat system appearing in the Chainmail rules , written by Gygax and Jeff Perren and published in the spring of 1971 , were also applied for a short time . Finding those lacking , Arneson wrote modified rules to apply to his role @-@ playing game scenarios . The game that evolved from those modifications to Chainmail was the game Blackmoor , which modern players of D & D would describe as a campaign setting rather than a " complete game . " The gameplay would be recognizable to modern D & D players , featuring the use of fixed hit points , armor class , character development , and dungeon crawls . This setting was fleshed out over time and continues to be played to the present day . Arneson described Blackmoor as " roleplaying in a non @-@ traditional medieval setting . I have such things as steam power , gunpowder , and submarines in limited numbers . There was even a tank running around for a while . The emphasis is on the story and the roleplaying . " Details of Blackmoor and the original campaign , which was by then established on the map of the Castle & Crusade Society 's " Great Kingdom " , were first brought to print briefly in issue # 13 of the Domesday Book , the newsletter of the Castle & Crusade Society in July 1972 , and later in much @-@ expanded form as The First Fantasy Campaign , published by Judges Guild in 1977 .

Although much of what was later deemed to be " Tolkien @-@ influenced " in D & D and the concept of adventuring in " dungeons " originated with Blackmoor , as a setting it was not purely fantasy @-@ oriented , as it incorporated recent history and science fiction elements . These are visible much later in the DA module series published by TSR (particularly City of the Gods) , but were also present from the early to mid @-@ 1970s in the original campaign and parallel and intertwined games run by John Snider , whose ruleset developed from these adventures and was intended for publication by TSR from 1974 as the first science fiction RPG .

= = Dungeons & Dragons = =

In November 1972 , Arneson and David Megarry traveled to Lake Geneva to meet with Gary Gyax . Arneson thought that Gyax would be interested in Megarry 's Dungeon ! boardgame , which Megarry had developed as a player in Blackmoor , and Gyax had expressed a desire to play a game of Blackmoor itself . After playing in the Blackmoor game Arneson refereed , Gyax almost immediately began a similar campaign of his own which he called Greyhawk and asked Arneson for a draft of his playing rules . The two then collaborated by phone and mail , and playtesting carried out by their various groups and other contacts . Gyax and Arneson wanted to publish the game , but Guidon Games and Avalon Hill rejected it . Arneson could not afford to invest in the venture .

Gygax felt that there was a need to publish the game as soon as possible , since similar projects were being planned elsewhere , so rules were hastily put together and Arneson 's own final draft was never used . Despite all this , Brian Blume eventually provided the funding required to publish the original Dungeons & Dragons set in 1974 , with the initial print run of 1 @,@ 000 selling out within a year and sales increasing rapidly in subsequent years . Further rules and a sample dungeon from Arneson 's original campaign (the first published RPG scenario in a professional publication) were released in 1975 in the Blackmoor supplement for D & D , named after the campaign setting . The supplement offered little in the way of details from Arneson 's actual campaign , however .

Blackmoor showed D & D as Arneson imagined it ; as he had not been able to work with the final proofs of the original game , this was his first opportunity to present his take on the game . He included new classes for monks and assassins , more monsters , and " The Temple of the Frog " , the first published RPG adventure for other people to run . Although the book bore the setting 's name , it focused more on Arneson 's house rules rather than background material .

Arneson formally joined TSR as their Director of Research at the beginning of 1976 but left at the end of the year to pursue a career as an independent game designer .

= = After TSR = =

In 1977 , despite the fact that he was no longer at TSR , Arneson published Dungeonmaster 's Index , a 38 @-@ page booklet that indexed all of TSR 's D & D properties to that point in time , including Chainmail , the original 3 @-@ book set of D & D , the five D & D supplements (Greyhawk ; Blackmoor ; Eldritch Wizardry ; Gods , Demi @-@ gods & Heroes ; and Swords & Spells) , and all seven issues of The Strategic Review .

TSR had agreed to pay Arneson royalties on all D & D products , but when the company came out with Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (AD & D) in 1977 , it claimed that this was a significantly different product and did not pay him royalties . In response , Arneson filed the first of five lawsuits against Gygax and TSR in 1979 . In March 1981 , as part of a confidential agreement , Arneson and Gygax resolved the suits out of court by agreeing that they would both be credited as " co @-@ creators " on the packaging of D & D products from that point on , but the court ruled that Arneson was not due monies for the AD & D game . This did not end the lingering tensions between them . (Twenty years later , Wizards of the Coast (WotC) bought TSR and wanted to drop the word " Advanced " from its planned third edition of D & D. WotC CEO Peter Adkison approached Arneson to resolve the two @-@ decade @-@ old issue and Arneson released all claims to D & D for an undisclosed sum of money .)

Arneson wrote up the Blackmoor setting for Judges Guild in The First Fantasy Campaign (1977) . In 1979 Arneson and Richard L. Snider , an original Blackmoor player , co @-@ authored Adventures in Fantasy , a role @-@ playing game that attempted to recapture the " original spirit of the Role Playing Fantasy Game " that Arneson had envisioned in the early 1970s , instead of what D & D had become . In the early 1980s he established his own game company , Adventure Games - staffed largely by Arneson 's friends , most of whom were also members of a Civil War reenactment group - that produced the miniatures games Harpoon (1981) and Johnny Reb (1983) , as well as a new edition of his own Adventures in Fantasy role @-@ playing game (1981) . The company also put out about a half @-@ dozen Tékumel related books , due to Arneson 's friendship with M. A. R. Barker . Adventure Games was profitable , but Arneson found the workload to be excessive and finally sold the company to Flying Buffalo . Flying Buffalo picked up the rights to Adventure Games in 1985 ; because Arneson owned a portion of Flying Buffalo , he let them take care of the rest of the company 's stock and IP when he shut the company down .

While Gary Gygax was president of TSR in the mid @-@ 1980s , he and Arneson reconnected , and Arneson briefly relinked Blackmoor to D & D with the " DA " (Dave Arneson) series of modules set in Blackmoor (1986 ? 1987) . The four modules , three of which were written by Arneson , detailed Arneson 's campaign setting for the first time . When Gygax was forced out of TSR , Arneson was removed from the company before a planned fifth module could be published . Gygax and Arneson again went their separate ways . In 1986 Arneson wrote a new D & D module set in Blackmoor called " The Garbage Pits of Despair " , which was published in two parts in Different Worlds magazine issues # 42 and # 43 .

In 1988 Arneson stated his belief that RPGs , whether paper or computer , were still " hack and slash " and did not teach novices how to play , and that games like Ultima IV " have stood pretty much alone as quirks instead of trend setters " as others did not follow their innovations . He hoped that computer RPGs would teach newcomers how to role play while offering interesting campaigns , and said thatSSI 's Gold Box games did not innovate on the genre as much as he had hoped . Arneson stepped into the computer industry and founded 4D Interactive Systems , a computer

company in Minnesota that is still in business today . He also did some computer programming and worked on several games . He eventually found himself consulting with computer companies .

Living in California in the late 1980s , Arneson had a chance to work with special education children . Upon returning to Minnesota , he pursued teaching and began speaking at schools about educational uses of role @-@ playing and using multi @-@ sided dice to teach math . In the 1990s he began working at Full Sail , a private university that teaches multimedia subjects , and continued there as a professor of computer game design until 2008 .

In 1997 , after Wizards of the Coast purchased TSR , Peter Adkison wrote a check to Arneson to free up D & D from royalties owed to Arneson ; this allowed Wizards to retitle Advanced Dungeons & Dragons to simply Dungeons & Dragons . Around 2000 , Arneson was working with videographer John Kentner on Dragons in the Basement , a video documentary on the early history of role @-@ playing games . Arneson describes the documentary : " Basically it is a series of interviews with original players (' How did D & D affect your life ? ') and original RPG designers like Marc Miller (Traveller) and M.A.R. Barker (Empire of the Petal Throne) . " He also made a cameo appearance in the Dungeons & Dragons movie as one of many mages throwing fireballs at a dragon , although the scene was deleted from the completed movie . Arneson and Dustin Clingman founded Zeitgeist Games to produce an updated d20 System version of the Blackmoor setting . Goodman Games published and distributed Dave Arneson 's Blackmoor in 2004 , and Goodman produced a few more Blackmoor products in the next year . Code Monkey Publishing released Dave Arneson 's Blackmoor : The First Campaign (2009) for 4th edition D & D.

= = Personal life = =

Arneson married Frankie Ann Morneau in 1984 ; they had one daughter , Malia , and two grandchildren .

Arneson continued to play games his entire life , including D & D and military miniature games , and regularly attended an annual meeting to play the original Blackmoor in Minnesota . At Full Sail University he taught the class " Rules of the Game " , a class in which students learned how to accurately document and create rule sets for games that were balanced between mental challenges for the players and " physical " ones for the characters . He retired from the position on June 19 , 2008 .

Arneson died on April 7 , 2009 , after battling cancer for two years . According to his daughter , Malia Weinhagen , " The biggest thing about my dad 's world is he wanted people to have fun in life ... I think we get distracted by the everyday things you have to do in life and we forget to enjoy life and have fun . "

= = Honors and tributes = =

Arneson received numerous industry awards for his part in creating Dungeons & Dragons and other role @-@ playing games . In 1984 he was inducted into the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design 's Hall of Fame and in 1999 was named by Pyramid magazine as one of The Millennium 's Most Influential Persons , " at least in the realm of adventure gaming " . He was honored as a " famous game designer " by being featured on the king of hearts in Flying Buffalo 's 2008 Famous Game Designers Playing Card Deck .

Three days after his death , Wizards of the Coast temporarily replaced the front page of the Dungeons & Dragons section of their web site with a tribute to Arneson . Other tributes in the gaming world included Order of the Stick # 644 , and Dork Tower for April 8 , 2009 .

Video game publisher Activision Blizzard posted a tribute to Arneson on their website and on April 14 , 2009 , released patch 3 @.@ 1 of the online role @-@ playing game World of Warcraft , The Secrets of Ulduar , dedicated to Arneson .

Turbine 's Dungeons and Dragons Online added an in @-@ game memorial altar to Arneson in the Ruins of Threnal location in the game . They also created an in @-@ game item named the " Mantle of the Worldshaper " that is a reward for finishing the Threnal quest chain that is narrated by

Arneson himself . The Mantle 's description reads : " A comforting and inspiring presence surrounds you as you hold this cloak . Arcane runes run along the edges of the fine cape , and masterfully drawn on the silken lining is an incredibly detailed map of a place named ' Blackmoor ' . "

On October 30 , 2010 , Full Sail University dedicated the student game development studio space as " Dave Arneson 's Blackmoor Studios " in Arneson 's honor .

= = Partial bibliography = =

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Adventures in Blackmoor (D & D Module : DA1) (1986) (with David J. Ritchie)

Temple of the Frog (D & D Module : DA2) (1986) (with David J. Ritchie)

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