Captain (RCN Ret'd) Christopher G Pratt, OMM, CD

Born to Harold and Margaret Pratt in Okotoks, Alberta on May 27, 1924. Before the age if 1, he moved with his family from Okotoks, AB to Victoria, BC where he enjoyed many summers playing with his beloved sister Jean at Weirs Beach in Metchosin. Both the sea and Metchosin remained in his blood for life.

Chris' first shipboard experience was as a young deckhand with the Canadian Pacific Railway Princess fleet. Chris attended Victoria College and UBC prior to switching to the senior year at the newly established Canadian naval college, HMCS Royal Roads, graduating as a Naval Midshipman in 1942 (student # 016).

He was immediately sent to England to complete sea training as a navigator on HMS Anson and King George V. During WWII, he saw action on the dangerous Murmansk Run, shepherding supply convoys across the Arctic Ocean to deliver war materials to the Soviet Union.

After the war, Chris saw a future in the Navy and life at sea returned to the RCNC as a Staff Officer and Navigation Instructor. Then back to active sea duty, serving through the Korean War and into peacetime. He served aboard several vessels, including HMCS Haida, Crusader (in command), New Waterford (in command), and Kootenay (in command), and was appointed Commander RCN in 1959 and Captain RCN in 1967. His many letters home to family during this time referred to seaports and voyages in all parts of the world. In 1962 he joined a NATO team at Virginia Beach Naval centre working with Americans to show them the many innovations the NRC had developed to track submarines. Returning to Canada, he served in the National Defence College in 1967 and was appointed

Commandant Canadian Forces Maritime Warfare School (HMCS Stadacona), in 1970 and Director of Naval Reserves at NHQ, Ottawa, in 1972. He is fondly remembered by graduates of the Reserve for his pioneering efforts to reform and professionalize that service. He was appointed an Officer of the Order of Military Merit (OMM) in 1978, when he released from service.

Chris was the Honorary President and Senior Ex-Cadet of the Vancouver Island Ex-Cadet Club from 2012 until his passing. He was the last surviving member of the RCNC wartime inaugural class of 1942.

Following his service, Chris staged a rewarding second act. Vowing to “fill in the blanks” on the maps of places he had visited with the Navy, he became an avid voyager. He traveled solo and with friends and family to destinations around the globe, from Everest Base Camp and the ancient Silk Road Trail to Mayan temples in Mesoamerica. In his later decades, he was especially fond of departing for months at a time, visiting friends and exploring Mexico and Guatemala in his trustworthy Volkswagen.

His other pursuits are too many to list. Among his post-service achievements, Chris held a senior management position at the New York Metropolitan Opera Company, managed the Chemistry Dept Co-op Program at the University of Victoria, was Honorary President of the Vancouver Island Ex-Cadet Club (regularly laying the wreath at the November 11th Service of Remembrance at Royal Roads), supported international students as a Patron and host for Pearson College. He dedicated years of support to land conservation efforts around his home in Metchosin. In particular, the preservation of a Rural Metchosin and its jewel, Mary Hill, home to many unique and rare plants.

Chris was predeceased by his estranged wife Mary in 2022 and his sister Jean (AJ) in 2014. He is survived by his four

children and their spouses, Mark (Megan), Tisha, Nick (Janice) and Sarah (Grant), seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

He was the last surviving Canadian Younger Brother of the Trinity House fraternity for seafarers and is believed to have been the last surviving member of the first graduating class from RRMC.

With many thanks to Garth and Kimberly Irwin, family and fellow Metchosin-ites who helped him achieve his final goal of spending his last years at home with his cat Friday and a panoramic view of the sea he loved so much.

Chris was curious about the beliefs of many faiths. Later in life, he became very interested in Buddhism and followed many of the practices of that tradition.

Chris was fond of saying:

So many faiths, so many creeds,

So many paths that twist and wind,

While all this world truly needs,

Is the just the practice to be kind.

A celebration of Chris's life will be held at a later date.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens
www.mccallgardens.com

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