

Douglas Hewson Christie

Born, Winnipeg, April 24, 1946, died of metastatic liver cancer, Victoria, March 11, 2013.

Predeceased by his mother Norma in 2008. Survived by wife Keltie Zubko, son Cadeyrn, daughter Kalonica, sisters Jane Christie and Myna Cryderman, brother Neil, father Douglas, and the extended Zubko family.

Doug graduated with a double major in political science and philosophy from the University of Winnipeg in 1967. He moved to Vancouver where he graduated in law from UBC in 1970. He has lived in Victoria, B.C. since 1970, where he has maintained a sole proprietorship law practice in an age of large legal corporations, occupying a humble office the size of two parking spaces across from the courthouse. His practice initially focused on criminal law, but he later developed a deeply passionate interest in freedom of expression and civil liberties. Throughout his life as a lawyer, he embodied the true spirit of “pro bono publico” often representing clients of little means to ensure they had a voice. He was a born defense lawyer, brilliant cross-examiner, and tenacious arguer.

As Canada’s most prolific defender of free speech, he appeared in the Supreme Court of Canada for this issue more times than any other counsel in Canada, to date.

He defended the landmark cases of Keegstra, Zundel, Malcolm Ross, John Ross Taylor, Canadian Liberty Net, and Finta, all before the Supreme Court of Canada. Doug also appeared in the Old Bailey and the Court of Appeal in London, England, and throughout Canada in all levels of court, and his family spent much time seeing him off and greeting him at airports.

His wife Keltie worked with him as his legal assistant during the years before the children were born and together they

worked on the case of which Doug was proudest. As defense counsel in Canada's only war crimes trial (the Finta case), he took part in court proceedings for the defense in Hungary, Israel and Canada. After a 2 year investigation, millions of prosecution dollars and a 9 month trial, the accused was acquitted without calling evidence, in less than 2 hours on the basis of Doug's cross examination. After the crown's appeal to the Supreme Court, he was successful in having the law severely restricted and it has never been used again.

Up until the time of his death, he continued to advise clients around the world on publication and free speech issues. Two and a half weeks before he died, he was struggling to finish a jury trial, fighting pain and nausea, but true to his aim, he still wanted to finish the trial to the best of his ability. He deeply regretted to the end that he was leaving his clients unrepresented by his illness and death.

During the 1990's he built a reputation as a major inspirational speaker for freedom, travelling the world speaking about its importance.

In 1978, he created a political movement called the Western Canada Concept, for the Independence of Western Canada. As the major advocate of Western Canadian independence, he spoke in 100's of meetings in most little towns and cities of Western Canada, on talk shows, to schools and universities, and widely varied associations. For example, in July of 1981, he gave 36 speeches in 30 days, travelling throughout BC and Alberta, advocating Western Canadian separation. He ran in many provincial and federal elections, always taking the opportunity to express his political opinions.

Cadeyrn and Kalonica will greatly miss his ever-present guidance, encouragement, love and support as well as the spirited arguments he delighted in starting around the table at meals. Keltie is profoundly grateful for the great joy (amid the challenges) of life and work with him for 32 years.

He was a kind and humorous man who gave freely all that he had of his wisdom, his fighting spirit, his off-the-wall solutions and his love of beauty. In memory of Doug, and in lieu of flowers, we ask simply that you do as he always tried to do: pass on any kindness shown to you, to someone else.

Prayers will be held at McCall's Downtown, Johnson and Vancouver Streets at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 14th. Funeral Mass will be held at St. Andrews Cathedral, 10 a.m., Friday, March 15th, with private interment to follow. There will be a reception at the Laurel Point Inn, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. All those who wish to share their memories or who were moved by his life, are welcome. Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Bros. Funeral Home

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