Dr. James “Jim” Crosbie Donald

In Loving Memory

Peacefully surrounded by family, our lovely Dad passed away on November 11, 2024 in Victoria, B.C., Dr. James “Jim” C. Donald was born in Dyce, a small village in the northeast of Scotland, on February 12, 1931, to Jane (nee Crosbie) and Francis Donald. Predeceased by his younger sister Frances (George Robertson).

At age 13 he suffered a perforated appendix, which kept him in the hospital for several weeks but was part of the reason he eventually decided to become a surgeon. He graduated from Gordon’s College and then medical school at Aberdeen University in 1954. Following internships in Aberdeen and Glasgow, he was conscripted into the army and sent to Malaya (now Malaysia), where he spent time in the military hospital practicing tropical medicine. While in Malaya he read a medical journal article about vacancies for interns at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, B.C. It was in Victoria he settled and met his soulmate and beautiful wife, Ann Marie (nee Clarke). They married in 1962.

In the early 1960s, Jim started out as a general practitioner in Victoria, but his desire to practice surgery led to a surgical residency at the Mason Clinic in Seattle, where he spent a total of five years at the Children’s Hospital and University of Washington before moving back to Victoria. According to the global History of Surgical Paediatrics, Dr. James C. Donald was the first fully trained and certified Paediatric Surgeon on Vancouver Island. For the next 32 years he practiced general and pediatric surgery at the Royal Jubilee Hospital and Victoria General Hospital. Jim loved his career and was active in many medical committees and

associations, including as past president of the Victoria Medical Society, the B.C. Surgical Society, the North Pacific Surgical Society, and past vice president of the Pacific Coast Surgical Association. In 2019 he was awarded the Kenneth A.J. Founders Award for his significant contributions to the Pacific Coast Surgical Association.

Always a gentleman, thoughtful and kind, Jim would never speak ill of people or talk down to anyone. At his retirement party in 2000, dozens of former patients, staff, and colleagues spoke to his family about his positive impact on their lives.

Jim had a strong moral backbone and enjoyed his weekly services at Knox Presbyterian Church, where he was also an elder. He believed in tradition, duty, and the dedicated service to others. He was active in the Army Reserves Medical Corps, rising to the ranks of Hon. Lt. Col. of the 13th Field Ambulance, 1993-1998 and a devoted volunteer with the St. John's Ambulance Association for which he was awarded the Service Medal of the Order of St. John.

Jim leaves behind his wife, Ann Marie, of 62 years, and his daughters, sons-in-law, and grandchildren: Fiona (Colin), Gillian (Steve), Betsy (Doug), Sarah (Kris), and Ben, Lucy, Georgia, Lydia, Sophie, Molly, and extended family. Along with his wife, he was deeply proud of his family and a champion of their education, creativity, and hard work. Quiet humour was never far from his lips, and his daughters have many memories of performing silly skits and laughing at family jokes while at home and on many holidays together. Dad was eternally positive and loved gardening, tropical plants, tennis, model engineering, reading, socializing, and traveling. He was especially fond of warm weather and good food and wine—whether in the South of France, Hawaii or in his Oak Bay garden sipping on B.C. wine bedside a plate of cheese with his beloved Ann Marie. A private service was held off the waters of Oak Bay, and a celebration of life will be saved for warmer days.

The family would like to thank the care team at Sunrise Seniors Living for their incredible care of Dad during the last two years of his life. Donations in his name to St. John’s Ambulance Society are welcome.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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