Dr. Thomas A. M. Peet



Dr. Thomas A.M. Peet passed away a year ago, on the night of December 31, 2020, with his daughter, Karen, and son-in-law, Ray Hawksworth, by his side. He was married to the late Kathryn Peet (Shirn) for 55 fun-filled years, a match made in heaven.

Tom was born in Dundee, Scotland, to the late Capt. Thomas Milner Peet and Mrs. Minnie Peet (Thomson). His first few years were spent aboard ships his father captained with the Bombay and Persia Steam Navigation Company. He grew up in the Fife towns of Wormit, Newport-on-Tay, and Tayport. Tom graduated from Dundee High School in 1942 where he was a cadet and sergeant with the Dundee High School Company Army Cadet Force. He served his country in the Home Guard and qualified for a wartime BSc degree.



Post war, he was in Germany and Holland as a Commanding Officer of ground radar stations, and Flying Officer with the RAF in Germany until 1948, then returned to St. Andrews to start his medical degree. In 1954, Tom graduated from the University of St. Andrews with both a BSc (Math and Physics) and MB ChB (Medicine & Surgery). He worked as House Surgeon/Physician in Middlesbrough, Inverness, Durham, and Penzance. While at Doctors Hospital in New York City in the late 1950s, he was introduced to Pennsylvania born Kathryn at a party (aka Katie, Kay). He returned to Cornwall to work in General Practice in Camborne, a place we happily re-visited with him in 2004.



In 1959 Tom moved to Victoria, BC to work at Royal Jubilee Hospital, rotating through Obstetrics and Gynaecology, General Surgery, Emergency and General Practice, plus coordinating the interns in Paediatrics. The tennis courts, trees, flowers and Cornwall-like climate attracted him to the job.

In 1961 Kathryn resigned as Assistant Professor of Speech and Drama at Paterson State Teachers College, NJ, to marry Tom. They spent the rest of their lives in Victoria with annual trips to Scotland, a place they adored and where they felt most at home.

Words cannot describe Dr. Peet's dedication to medicine and to his patients. He ran his own family practice, delivering hundreds of babies until his retirement in 1992. He believed



in the type of care that has become a lost art in today's health care system. He warned that too many administrators and superfluous forms were causing dysfunction. He was a fierce advocate for the elderly, disabled, and homeless, researching and writing about the ways these populations should be housed and served. He moved mountains for those needing care and counselling and worked hard to ensure those in less fortunate circumstances were not ignored. His main research included connections between at-risk pregnancies and youth violence, the effects of pre and post partum depression on babies, and connections between pre/post natal care and adult aggression, homelessness and mental health. He was a founding board member of the Youth Empowerment Society and welcomed youth from the streets as patients. His research also included computer science in medicine and the health hazards of microwave radiation. He was also a member of the American Geriatric Association.

Dad mastered golf by age three. And no surprise that his

mother played Bobby Jones in 1939 and after 22 holes were ‘all square’. He was honourary life member of the Victoria Golf Club and overseas member of Scotscraig Golf Club in Tayport, Scotland. He created the Himalayas Putting Trophy for the annual competition held with friends and family at the Himalayas Putting Green in St. Andrews. He excelled at swimming, diving, tennis, hill climbing, bridge and played piano by ear beautifully. He also loved the ocean, running full force into the waves with total joy.



Passionate about preserving history, Tom and Kay, along with Dr. Robert and Mrs. Muriel Gale, bought 218 St. Andrews St. in Victoria in 1963, residence of Alice and Emily Carr, and saved it from demolition, along with Carr belongings. In the early 1970s Dr. Peet was chairman of the Archives Committee for the Victoria Medical Society, and helped secure and catalogue historical medical donations and acquired display cases to showcase these artifacts. As chairman, he initiated the preservation of both the Pemberton Memorial Chapel and Pemberton Memorial Operating Room at Royal Jubilee Hospital to gain heritage status as they were threatened by development.



His well over two hundred films and videos documented family trips, street scenes, 1950s New York, 1950s onwards of UK, USA and Canada and his golfing buddies. He switched to the latest technology in the 1980s packing a camera and portapak to the UK on every trip until VHS-C was invented. He had remarkable creativity and loved the latest innovations. He had the knack of engaging the public to act out interesting and hilarious scenes on film. In retirement he was chief videographer for Kay during her communication workshops here and in the UK.

Dr. Peet was a member of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Victoria where he served as Elder, on the Mission and Outreach

Committee, and Prayer Fellowship Group.

It was a great honour to meet Dad's fellow 1954 medical graduates in 2017, their last reunion in St. Andrews, and Dad's last trip to Scotland.



Dad wanted to live to 107 years old, but Parkinson's disease brutally ruled his last few years. Though an extreme physical and emotional struggle, he remained positive and engaged to the end. He was a patient many times and we wandered the hallways of RJH reminiscing about his past. He recognized when care was not the standard it should be, which prompted his now famous line, 'we need people with more humanity'. He meant, not to treat the disabled and elderly as mentally and/or physically incapable, or as burdens, or to write them off, especially due to age. He believed everyone needed a purpose, whatever their age and ability. To the very end, he saw joy in every living moment, whether we sat together in silence, blasted organ music, watched golf on TV, or discussed the latest in news and politics.

In his last month of life, Dad's delight was to have a room with a view that overlooked the Pemberton Memorial Chapel. The care from RJH 4 South was superb. The wonderful services streamed from Old Saint Paul's Scottish Episcopal Church in Edinburgh gave Dad and us immense strength and needed peace during such a horribly stressful time.

He was predeceased by his sister, Mrs. Helen Robertson. Uncle/Great Uncle Tom leaves nephew, John Robertson, and family in Australia; niece, Midge Richmond, and family in the UK, his cousins and families in the UK, and Kay's family in the USA. Some good news happened in December 2020 as he became a Great, Great Uncle to Oliver Richmond.

Dr. Peet had a massive streak of spontaneity and fun mixed

with an extreme sense of honour, determination and duty. Always with his bag, thermos and teabags packed, ready for the next wild adventure.

What a wonderful father, and father figure to many. Donations would be most appreciated to: Victoria Youth Empowerment Society, Anawim House, Our Place.



Stay Cool

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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