Fernand Gilbert Cordier

Passed away peacefully at home in Victoria following a brief illness.

Predeceased by daughter Lucile and son Michel, Fernand is survived by his wife Mary McAllister; his children Nicole (Michel Paradis), Philip (Manee Khamto) and Catherine; his sister Denise Ledru and nephew Christophe Roussel; his granddaughter France Cordier (Christopher Delassus); and his cousin Constant Cordier.

Fernand was born in Evin-Malmaison, a commune in the Bassin minier du Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France. Although the family experienced the hardships of wartime occupation, education was always a priority, and Fernand was the recipient of a number of scholarships and prizes. A keen student of language, as a teenager he practised his skills interpreting between the French Resistance and Allied soldiers during the liberation of France; for this he earned the “Médaille Commémorative Française de la Guerre 1939/1945” with the bar “Libération”. After completing his education at the Université de Lille in 1946, he took a position as an English teacher at the Lycée d’Arras.

He seized an opportunity to come to Canada, arriving in Montréal in June of 1947 to join the newly formed International Civil Aviation Organization, a specialized agency of the UN. There he excelled as a translator and was a pioneer in the emerging field of conference interpretation. As an interpreter he was respected and admired for his exquisite fluency in both French and English, for his calm, unassuming demeanour, and for his kindness and generosity towards newcomers entering the profession. When he retired in 1982 he was the Director of all ICAO language services.

In its early days, ICAO held many meetings in far-flung

places, and Fernand enjoyed those opportunities to see the world before the advent of mass tourism. He was seconded to interpret at Expo 67 and at the 1976 Olympics, and he was often called to Radio-Canada to interpret during important events, such as the moon landing.

Always a keen athlete, Fernand's first love was and remained soccer. In his retirement, however, he also came to love curling and was an active member of the Baie d'Urfé Curling Club. Fernand was an enthusiastic art collector, and over the years built an eclectic collection.

A gathering to share memories of Fernand will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 11, 2022 in the Sequoia Centre at McCall Gardens, 4665 Falaise Drive, Victoria, BC. The family requests that all attendees be fully vaccinated.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens
www.mccallgardens.com