

Gary McDonagh

Gary lived to work. All the passions of his life brought him new knowledge and challenges that always opened the door of new skills. The wind would fill his sails. He left our world Sept.16, 2023.

Gary was born in Blairmore Alberta on July 6th, 1935 to Russell and Dorothy McDonagh. He attended a boy's school in Vancouver until moving to the small town of Okotoks, Alberta where at the age of eleven he met a little nine-year-old girl, Marlene Aggett and asked her to go on a walk. They would marry thirteen years later. The couple settled in Edmonton and had two children, Barbara and Robert McDonagh. Gary was a patient, loving, nonjudgmental, helpful parent and grandfather, whose wisdom was sought and valued.

Gary had a mind and disposition that was always looking for answers and solutions. His first career was as a Civil Engineer for the Alberta Department of Highways mainly as a bridge designer in rural areas. He went on to earn his Masters Degree from Waterloo University in Applied Science. His thesis was a plan for the future traffic flow for all of Alberta that was adopted and implemented.

After four additional years of education Gary received his degree in Dentistry. This career change included a move from Edmonton to BC where he joined a dental practice in North Delta. Settling into their home near White Rock the family enjoyed twenty years of life and joy together, including skiing Mt. Baker, campouts, summer trips to Maui and music lessons.

After twenty years Gary sold his practice and took a position with the City of Vancouver practicing dentistry in a Downtown East Van clinic with a cliental of mainly homeless and underprivileged people. With this new position Gary and

Marlene moved to False Creek.

Upon retirement, ten years later, they moved to Nanaimo enjoying the healthiest happiest of years building gifted friendships, sailing their tiny boat; throwing over the crab traps and sleeping on the boat while exploring the local islands. They both contributed to the Duncan board for the Victoria Symphony yearly concert series. These years were highlights of their lives. A final move to Victoria brought them closer to their beloved music.

Gary's passion opened many doors, as his interests were broad and continuous. He built historic model ships from scratch such as the HMS Victory, the Endeavour and the Surprise. He carved small wooden birds to be held for comfort. He knew the challenges of deep wood chip carving, designed and built their fireplaces, cut and polished stones and coins creating jewelry and for many decades grew beautiful Bonsai.

Music was a deep lifelong love with trips to San Francisco in the 1960's for Jazz at the Blackhawk, to Opera's at the Met in NYC where he experienced his favourite; Wagner's "The Ring" series. Later he would re-write 'The Ring' as a children's book for his grandchildren. Love of art took them to many countries to visit the Prado, Uffizi, Musee d'Orsay, Musee du Louvre, Saatchi, National gallery of Taiwan, MOMA, VAG and our own exceptional Audain gallery in Whistler.

An incomplete list of Gary's curiosities and capabilities began with bottling his own wine in the 1960's. This would continue always, learning from a friend came the making of Walnut Port, and in the kitchen came bread making, peanut butter processing, salmon canning, and the pleasure of preparing dinner for many. He wrote several cook books and a book on fly fishing in BC, a pursuit he loved.

Travelling was treasured; hiking the Wall of China, waving from the Taj Mahal, looking down from the Eiffel tower, riding

camels around the Great Pyramids, a heritage kiss on the Blarney Stone, touching the Rock of Gibraltar and settling into the life of Portugal, Aix en Provence and the French Riviera. Embracing cuisines lead to his last position at the FIG Mediterranean Deli until his death.

Gary was so loved, by so many. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Marlene, who he wrote, "did him the honour of sharing her life with him", his daughter Barbara Jill, son Robert Patrick, five grandchildren; Erica, Samantha, Summer, Grayden and Rachel, and three great grandchildren, Aedan, Emilia and Sadie Jane. Two cousins remain, Mary Ann Bull and Susan Allin.

We thank the many many friends of Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, White Rock, Nanaimo and Victoria. Your friendships were a gift to his world.

You were our favourite "HELLO" and our hardest "GOOD BYE."

A celebration of Life will be held on March 24, 2024, at the Esquimalt Gorge Pavilion, 1070 Tillicum Rd, Victoria. Should you kindly wish to offer a donation a suggestion would be the [Mustard Seed Foundation](#).

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens

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