

John Arthur Bailey FCA (UK)

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of John at the Royal Jubilee Hospital, Victoria on December 19, 2023 after a sudden, short illness. He was surrounded by his beloved wife of nearly 40 years, Barbara (nee Kemp), and their children Peter, Simon (Yumiko) and Anna. He leaves behind his sisters Caroline and Paddy (Pie) and many relatives in the UK, Australia and Canada. His loss is immeasurable and he will be greatly missed.

John was born in London, England, the son of Commander Arthur J. Bailey OBE RN and Ann Bailey. As the son of a naval officer, John moved frequently around the south of England, finally settling close to the English Channel in Cornwall. His early teenage summers were spent living with a stonemason's family in France, helping out in the business while becoming fully bilingual. His secondary education and accountancy studies were completed in Plymouth, a short ferry ride across the River Tamar from his home in Cornwall. Once qualified, his career as an oil and mining executive began. A yearning for adventure, instilled in him by his father, prompted John to seek his first employment with Price Waterhouse in Amsterdam. As one interested in furthering his career, he took it upon himself to become proficient in Dutch. From Amsterdam, he joined Shell International Petroleum, moving on to Billiton International Metals in The Hague. In 1979, he was appointed Vice President Finance of Billiton Canada Ltd. His expat lifestyle ended seven years later with his repatriation to the Manchester area where he held various positions in the Downstream and Chemical business of Shell International Petroleum in the UK. In 1994, he moved to the Regional Treasury division of Shell International and specialized in project financing, particularly in less developed countries. (His success in this area earned him an invitation to the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace). His final position

with Shell was CFO of the Shell petrol business in the UK and Ireland before retiring and returning to Canada in 2003.

John's retirement was short lived. A few months in, while still unpacking boxes, he received a call from a former Billiton colleague who was now a principal at Quadra Mining Ltd. John was lured back to the work force, hired to lend a hand on the commercial side, becoming the "Mr. Fix-it" of the company during intense periods of mergers and acquisitions. After the company was taken over in 2012, John continued on for a few more years, consulting for various projects. It was a source of some disbelief last year when he received a letter congratulating him on his 50 years as an accountant.

He is fondly and affectionately remembered by those who worked for and with him. For some, working with John was the highlight of their careers. Besides being a good accountant, colleagues described him as being good with people, a good manager, and a good man. He consistently forged close knit teams, creating team spirit and pride in their accomplishments. John was friendly, open and took time with each individual.

So many people simply characterize John as "one of the good ones" taken far too soon. He is remembered for his ability to treat everyone equally. He was acknowledged an excellent negotiator, both by those with whom he worked as well as family members who appreciated his deft maneuvering during a particularly tricky land negotiation in Barbara's family. As the eldest, John was the head of his UK family, but also the unofficial head of the Kemp family where he was considered "the glue that held the family together". He has been described as kind, gentle, unassuming, humble, and very easy with whom to spend time. He understood people, was a good listener and knew how to give them what they needed without being asked. John also had a way with the family's much loved cocker spaniels, Sam and Susie, as well as other people's dogs.

John was a valued mentor with both colleagues and family members. Several people have highlighted the significance of John's guidance and how in some cases he led them to make life changing decisions. One said, "I owe everything to John". Those who knew John recognized in him a person of impeccable integrity and values, and trusted his judgement.

While John had a varied and often exciting career, the real adventure of his life was his 40 plus years with Barbara. They met at a Christmas party in The Beaches (Toronto) where they found themselves, an accountant and a young MBA grad, in a room full of networking lawyers. She was attracted to his fine manners, his amusing turn of phrase and wit, and definitely not his confusing mix of colours in his outfit of choice. She would have been more sympathetic had she known he was colour blind. It was not long before they realized they had found their lifelong partners. They shared many common interests, notably books, skiing, water sports, good food and wine, cottage life and travel. John always said he married for the fun and the adventure, both of which continued until his untimely death. They spent many summers at the Kemp family cottage before buying their own across the bay. John was curious and well informed about the world. He was known and sometimes teased by Barbara for always having his Economist tucked under his arm. John and Barbara travelled extensively for years: Europe, North and South America, Asia, Australia, New Zealand and more. There were few places they hadn't wanted to visit and not done so. Travel frequently involved at least one child in tow, Anna being the one who accompanied them the most. John's happiest destination was Cape Horn where he proudly walked the perimeter of the windswept island and signed his name in the guest book.

John's enthusiasm for life led him to become an accomplished sailor, table tennis player, and skier, skiing his last run at 74. He was also an enthusiastic but slightly less accomplished golfer. That did not stop him from being outstanding company

in the clubhouse afterwards. He was a lover of jazz, classical music (kick started in Amsterdam where he would frequently stroll a short distance from his flat to The Concertgebouw) and opera, the latter of which took him from the Santa Fe Opera Festival to the Sydney Opera House.

John felt truly blessed to have three devoted children. They will have a wealth of memories on which to reflect, many of which involve a healthy dose of British humour, anything from Monty Python to The Two Ronnies to Have I Got News For You. He always encouraged his children to pursue their interests, believe in themselves and take bold leaps, often saying, "Do it—it's an adventure", even if he had apprehensions. This attitude led Anna and Simon to embark on many adventures, most notably Anna travelling South America solo for one and a half years at 24, and Simon doing the Everest Base Camp walk in winter when he was 20. Peter chose to chase his dreams in Whistler, BC. John would tell them to stay put when things got tough, always trusting that things would improve, and in the process teaching his children to be resilient in difficult times. He encouraged his children to know their value in both their work and personal lives, ensuring they never settled for anything less than what they deserved. John viewed life as a journey that provided many learning opportunities. If something hadn't gone to plan in one of his children's lives, he viewed it as a learning opportunity for them to learn and would calmly say, "Well... (one of John's frequent, long pauses), there's a lesson in all of this". He'd lend a compassionate ear before diving in to help them solve whatever problem required assistance.

Despite his devotion to work and family, John always found time to volunteer in the community. He wrote lively match reports for the Bookham Colts Football Club in the UK, acted as treasurer for numerous community organizations in the UK, The Netherlands and Canada, and most notably and recently the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra.

Having lived in several places in the UK, and Toronto and Kelowna in Canada, John and Barbara finally settled in Victoria, 400 metres from the Juan de Fuca Strait. It was his wish to spend his final years close to the sea, ending his life as he had begun it. His sister commented: "I have so many memories of John on, or by, (but almost never) in the water." He was a skilled sailor, but never much of a swimmer. Summers were spent on the water, kayaking at their beloved Twin Lakes, hosting family and friends and enjoying the call of the loon in the quiet of a Northern Ontario evening. They travelled to their cottage from both Kelowna and Victoria for five consecutive summers, always in their Volvo station wagon, loaded to the gills, for their long journey. Those many drives were an adventure in themselves, until recently with an aging cocker spaniel. John loved the open road, the playlists and podcasts, the scenery of this magnificent country.

John's journey through life was guided by integrity, hard work, humour, patience, and above all, humility, respect and consideration of others. One of John's many talents was his ability to make every person feel welcome, respected and valued which led him to become a trusted colleague, confidant and friend to many. He will be remembered for many things, not the least of which is what he himself said in a comedic will he wrote in the 1970's where he says, "I have always believed in a sense of humour and enjoying oneself and I would like to be remembered for that". He will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

As John wished, cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will be held in the summer. For those who wish, donations may be made to the [Heart and Stroke Foundation](#) or a charity of your choice.

Memories, stories and condolences may be shared with the family below.

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