

John Gordon Sanderson

Engineer, Fisherman, Shipyard Owner and all-around swashbuckler, John passed away at home on February 26, 2021 attended by his loving wife, Sandra. The first child of Adrian Sanderson and Eleanor Sanderson (nee Everall), John was born on February 28, 1937 in Vancouver but spent most of the first 4 years of his life on James Island before the family moved to Victoria where he spent the remainder of his youth, graduating from Oak Bay High School in 1954. Upon graduation he attended Victoria College and UBC to obtain his engineering degree in 1960. Along the way, he married and had 4 children while still in his 20s.

John practiced engineering for 17 years in Vancouver, first with his father's consulting firm (AB Sanderson and Associates) and then on his own from his office on Granville Island. In 1977, he decided fundamental change was in order and gave up engineering to indulge his early ambition to join the merchant marine. He bought a fishboat and henceforth gambled on the bounty of the sea. Appropriately, his first boat was called the Ocean Gambler and he went on to own a series of trollers and become a prominent spokesperson for west coast fishers serving as president of the Pacific Trollers Association (as did his late son Michael). Fishing remained his passion until he retired from active involvement in 1992. Throughout that time, he was unfailingly supported by his soulmate, Sandra Aitken who he married in 1987. Upon his retirement, John and Sandra cruised the west coast for pleasure and cruised for two years in the Caribbean.

Ever restless, John could not stay retired for long and on their return from Florida, indulged his passion for keeping the waterfront as a working harbour. With others, he purchased the Point Hope Shipyard which he co-owned and ran until into his 70s. He took a leadership role on policy matters affecting the harbour, serving as President of the

Victoria/Esquimalt Harbour Society, and director of the Harbour Authority. He even worked as a tour guide with Victoria Harbour Ferries where he shared his enthusiasm for the harbour with visitors to it. He was also heavily involved in the cleanup of the Gorge waterway over the past decade. He did not forsake terrestrial interests entirely, working at WineKits a DIY wine store in Victoria and, as Treasurer on the Board of the Burnside Gorge Community Association until Nov 2020.

John was a larger-than-life figure who could and often did dominate a room. Well read and articulate, he was comfortable with folks from all walks of life, having worked with mind and body in a remarkable range of environments. He never did anything in half measure and was always willing to take risks and adopt new ventures. At core he was an incurable optimist who saw potential where others might see only challenge. That attitude allowed him to wage a brave 5 year battle against the cancer that finally claimed him without losing his sense of humour or charm. Even as his health declined, he remained a regular at the Glo, a neighbourhood restaurant where he and Sandra could be found at their designated table several times a week until shortly before his death.

John benefited immensely from the unwavering support of Sandra, who survives him along with his children Ann, Geoff (Jacynthe) and Pamela, and his siblings Samantha and Chris (Diana), grandchildren Russell, (Kareen) Scott, Sonia and 4 great-grandchildren. Sadly, he was predeceased by his eldest son Michael and grandson Eric.

His memory will be treasured by all who had the good fortune to cross paths with him. He will be sadly missed by many friends, family, and business associates.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to the nurses, VIHA, and Victoria Hospice for all their loving home care.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Red Cross in John's name.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens

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