

Philip Christian Schmalenberg

Philip Schmalenberg passed away peacefully on March 24, 2017 at the age of 92 after a brief illness. He was predeceased by his parents and his sisters Annie, Ella, Lydia; his brother Oswald and two other brothers who died as infants. He is survived by his loving family: his sister, Emilie; his dear wife of 66 years, Nona; his 5 children Dale, Joy (Dance), Celia (Tikka), Garth and Blair; grandchildren Aaron, Kelly, Cara, Jasmin, Shanna, Riley, Riana, Nigel, Ryan, Thea, Kyle, Tyler, Kobi and 9 great-grandchildren Jaela, Ada, Nora, Jasper, Alexis, Gabrielle, Aubrey, Nurriya and Liya.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, at 11:00 a.m. at McCall Gardens, 4665 Falaise Drive, Victoria, BC., followed by the interment at Hatley Memorial Gardens, 2050 Sooke Road and a reception at Lions Cove, 290 Island Hwy., Dogwood Room at 2:00 p.m.

His Early Life

Philip was born in rural Saskatchewan in 1924, Philip Christian Schmalenberg, the oldest of 7 children. He remembered living in a two-room mud house on the prairie with his grandma and grandpa in one room and 9 in the other. From his early years, he learned to work hard on the farm and took on the family responsibility when his father passed away when he was only 16 years old. Philip was a strong willed individual and demonstrated his will while breaking wild horses. He often told stories of his early years, one of breaking horses so wild that his sisters would beg him not to get on them and cry when he went into the pen.

Philip loved music and was a natural entertainer. In his youth, he learned how to play the button accordion and began making his spending money by playing at local barn dances. Later, he learned to play the guitar and harmonica and could

play them in combination with each other and sing wonderful harmonies or yodel. He was raised a Lutheran but was always interested in studying other religions. After taking a course on world religions, he determined that all religions were essentially the same and from the same source.

While singing in a church in Regina, he met his beautiful wife, Nona and soon after they were married and started a family.

His Faith and Family life

In 1957, Philip encountered a co-worker who taught him about the Baha'i faith which taught about the unity of God, the unity of mankind and the unity of religion (i.e. that all religions are fundamentally the same and from the same God). Philip found the teachings of the Baha'i faith to be what he had always believed and, after 3 years of investigating, he accepted the faith and remained a devoted follower to the end of his life. Shortly after becoming a Baha'i his wife Nona also became a Baha'i and they raised their family with the teachings of Baha'u'llah, it's founder. Even today his library has books from every faith, some of the same ones he studied as a young man.

His Working Life

Philip was a wonderful supporter of his family. While in Edmonton, he began working as a plasterer and, initially, he didn't have a car, so he made a trailer for his tools and towed it behind his bicycle. Later, he sold sewing machines and learned to sew so that he could demonstrate the machines. Next, in Regina, he sold life insurance and it was during that time that he encountered the Baha'i faith through his friend and teacher, Angus Cowan, who was known to many in the Baha'i community as a Counsellor. Philip later worked as a drywall taper and was known for the quality of his work and, towards the end of his career, he became a top seller in real estate

while living in Oshawa. No matter his form of service, Philip was always known as a trustworthy individual who would always look out for the best interests of others.

His Service to the Community

As taught through the Baha'i teachings, Philip was "generous in prosperity and thankful in adversity." In fact, he went further and was often generous to strangers even while he struggled to support his family. He proved his loyalty to his faith by pioneering (moving to work in goal areas) several times to help out in forming Baha'i Local Spiritual assemblies, first in Fort William (later Thunder Bay) and later to Sault Ste. Marie. During those years, he traveled to work sites to do drywall taping. On his travels home, Philip would pick up hitchhikers during the 70's, when his children were in their early teens, and he often brought them home for a meal and a sleepover. He always shared the teachings of the Baha'i faith with them and everyone he met, as his gift to them. Philip's love for music continued throughout his life and he played and sang often at home and during the many community events he attended. He instilled the love of music in all 5 of his children and many of his grandchildren and, to this day, guitars and other instruments are found in each of their homes and they still love to sing together. The family loved to practice complex harmonies on long road trips in the car. Philip also strove to instill his faith in his children by taking them to Baha'i meetings, conferences and summer schools whenever he could afford to.

His Retirement

Philip retired from Real Estate in 1990 and moved with Nona to BC from Ontario in part to be a support to Nona's elderly mother and to be closer to their daughters and grandchildren. He remained an active member of Duncan and its local Baha'i community until 2012. He also served with Nona as a volunteer at Maxwell Baha'i School (Shawnigan Lake), while in his 80's,

scrubbing floors, washing window, changing beds and doing general repairs. He also volunteered as a driver to take cancer patients to the hospital in Victoria. As his children spread out around the world, Philip and Nona both traveled to visit them in China, Belize and other locations. He also traveled to Israel, Germany, Austria and other countries. In 2012, Philip and Nona moved to View Royal (Victoria) BC, once again to be closer to their daughters.

His Passing

Philip remained in good health though-out his life but towards his late 80s he was clearly growing weaker and relied more on his family to help him out. In his 92nd year, his life ended much as it was lived, with his loving family singing prayers at his bedside. Philip will long be remembered for his life of service and for entertaining at Bahai functions and community parties. Even until his last days he was quick to pull out his harmonica and play a tune. We will always hold him with us in our hearts.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens

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