

Thomas E. H. Lee, O.C.

On February 3, 2021 Thomas (Tom) Lee of Ottawa and Victoria passed away at the age of 79. Tom was the loving husband of Terry Lee, father of Tanya Lee (John Torrey) and Tom Lee (Heidi Barlow-Lee) and grandfather of Madeline, Celia, Ava and Owen.

Tom was born to Tom and Isabella Lee in December of 1941. He spent his childhood with his mother, grandparents and sisters Sharon and Lorna-Mae on a farm near Barrie, Ontario. Tom attended Barrie Central Collegiate Institute where he met his future wife of nearly 60 years, Terry McKnight. He was a proud member of the Barrie Collegiate band, which he credited with keeping him in school and fostering a lifelong love of music.

Tom was a proud Canadian and had a distinguished career in public service. His passion was the Canadian parks system, working in Ontario and British Columbia before becoming the head of Parks Canada in 1993. In 1998 he was appointed as the first Chief Executive Officer of the newly created Parks Canada Agency. The appointment was the highlight of his career and he attributed the success of the Agency to its talented and dedicated staff. In 2019 he was named an Officer of the Order of Canada for his contributions as a public servant and for his conservation of Canada's natural resources.

Tom often spoke and wrote movingly about the beauty of Canada. He would describe the "white seagulls on brown farm furrows, stone boats and old coats, barn swallows and pond wallows, red pin cherries, and ripe raspberries" of his childhood farm. He believed that you could hear Canada's "voices in its nature – a thundering waterfall, the cry of the osprey, the trembling of an aspen."

With his favourite travelling companion Terry, Tom had the

good fortune to travel the world, visiting every continent except Antarctica. They had the pins on a map on their wall to prove it. Tom could mend a canoe, lay a stone wall, tend a vegetable patch, build a playhouse or sundial for his grandchildren, take apart and rebuild a '51 MG and play the flamenco guitar. He could name trees and wildflowers as he walked. He could tell you when an approaching storm was a tornado. He read widely and thought deeply. He often returned to the great authors of Russian literature.

Tom's love for his wife spanned his ages. He inspired his children by example, mentored them with his words and supported their choices. He delighted in his grandchildren and his pride in each of them knew no bounds. While no funeral will be held for Tom, we ask you to keep him in your memories. The family will gather privately to celebrate Tom's life later in the year. Donations in his name may be made to Crohn's and Colitis Canada, the Nature Conservancy of Canada or a charity of your choice.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens

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