

## in memoriam

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### **Dr J.J. (Jack) McGhee 1931–2006**

Born in Princeton, BC, and raised in Trail, Jack and his younger brother, Gordon, agreed with their Glaswegian parents that they should try to avoid a life in the mines or the smelter and to go to university instead. Jack, having played for the Trail Smoke Eaters as a junior, was on the UBC hockey team after starting his studies there. Quickly realizing that he wasn't cut out for professional hockey, he concentrated on the study of medicine and was in the third graduating class of the UBC Faculty of Medicine, being licensed to practise in 1957.

With a group of classmates, he went to the UK and gained much experience in orthopaedic and general surgery. When off duty, he enjoyed all the cultural and sports opportunities offered in Europe. He passed the Edinburgh FRCS exam in 1962 and the London FRCS in 1964 and returned to BC in 1965 with me (his wife, Carolyn), also a physician.

During a year in Vancouver, Jack studied for the Canadian Fellowship (FRCS), which he achieved in 1965. On weekends off, we traveled around the province looking for a town that wanted a specialist surgeon. Prince George was the only city where we were welcomed with open arms, so we settled there. Jack formed a dynamic and legendary partnership with Dr Bob Ewert, who had earlier come back to his hometown as the city's first specialist general surgeon.

Jack was a very skilled surgeon, much loved for his humor, courtesy, humanity toward patients, and scrupulous professionalism. He was an inspiring and enthusiastic mentor for a generation of medical students and surgical residents.

Wanderlust led us to travel widely. On these travels, we also volunteered our professional services in Belize, Dominica, Papua New Guinea, and Somalia.

After 30 years, Jack retired from active practice in 1996. He was honored to be made an honorary member of the Department of Surgery of UBC in 1995 and of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC in 2000.

During his working life, his many hobbies included mountaineering. He was a member of the Alpine Club of Canada for 25 years and an active member of the Prince George Section, where he indulged another of his interests by entering and winning a photographic competition. He was a wonderful skier and undertook many traverses and climbs with and without guides.

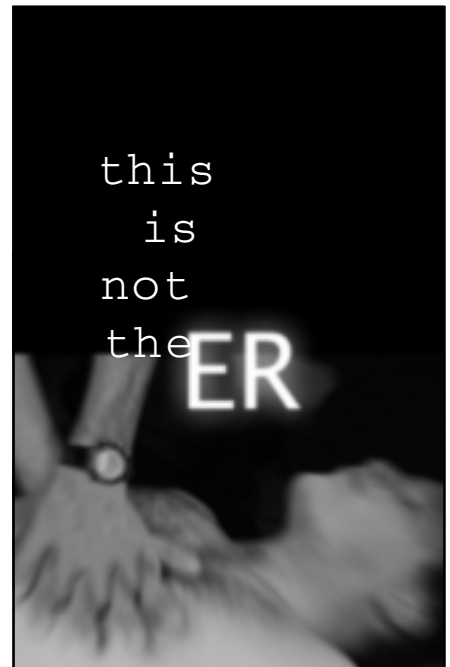
He loved fly fishing for trout and steelhead; studying entomology, which led not only to fly-tying but also to beekeeping, at which he became an expert; and traveling in and out of Canada, not only to work but also to explore cultural and natural history—he especially enjoyed bird watching. He gave beautiful slide shows of his journeys.

He carried on with these pursuits after retirement and added more, such as cooking. His final remarkable trek—around Manaslu in central Nepal in April 2005—was undertaken in great pain, before a diagnosis of advanced lung cancer was made in August 2005. Nobody was surprised that he bore his final illness with extraordinary courage and that he died at home, surrounded by his family, on 18 April 2006.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn; three adult children, Alex Jane, a nurse; Rachel, a physician; and Dougal, a carpenter (whose wife is Kirsten); and two grandchildren, all of whom he was extremely proud.

Donations are welcomed to the Jack McGhee Fund, c/o the Spirit of the North Healthcare Foundation at the Prince George Regional Hospital. This fund is for the enhancement of cancer treatment in the North.

—Carolyn McGhee, MB BS  
Prince George




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