

Dr David Klassen 1925–2008

On 3 September 2008 Dr David Klassen died after a 2-year struggle with progressive heart failure and its varied complications following cardiac surgery.

As Shakespeare said, “the play is played, the players now go forth.” Few players as colorful as David Klassen have left the surgical stage. He was a rugged individualist, sprung from solid Mennonite stock. He was the second of 11 children, born in Craigmyle, Alberta, to David G. Klassen and Mary (Peters) Klassen. His father had been a teacher in Russia and was fortunate to be able to immigrate to Canada from the repressive Russian regime, starting a new life in Canada as a farmer. Despite his parents’ struggle for survival during their early years in Canada, Dave and his siblings all found a way to gain an education and go on to success in varied professions. His younger brother, Bernie, has spent his professional years as a general medical practitioner in Chilliwack.

Dave earned his MD from the University of Alberta in 1949, interned 1 year at the University Hospital in Edmonton, then entered general practice in Mayerthorpe, Alberta, with Dr Verne Krause for a year, returning for a surgical residency at the Edmonton General for another year. He married the love of his life, Marjorie Kruk, during that year and then went into general practice in Vancouver with the late Dr Pat Doyle. In 1953 Dave moved to Chilliwack where he had his own general practice for 9 years. He then decided to specialize in otorhinolaryngology and moved with his six children to Pittsburgh, completing his residency and earning his FRCS in 1965. He then returned to Chilliwack where he practised full time until 1994.

Dave loved the unorthodox and had a healthy indifference to the opinions of others. His humor was one of mischievous laughter at human foibles, sometimes directed at his peers with a withering remark. His contrite apology the following day was unfailing. His most vitriolic tirades were reserved for the machinations of petty bureaucrats. At such times he would strut around the room like a rooster with akathisia. He was blunt to his patients, but they loved him and thrived on it.

He enriched hospital life. Sparks flew when he was around, and you couldn’t ignore him. Not that you would wish to, because he had an effortless ability to delight and entertain. In the doctors’ lounge at 7 a.m. he often provided warm, freshly baked bread to supplement his endless supply of jokes and anecdotes.

Age had little effect on his attributes and characteristics. The term “retired physician,” in his case, was an oxymoron. He continued to possess a restless energy with an enormous capacity for work. During his active and so-called retired years, he took his specialist skills to Bella Bella, Sechelt, Fraser Lake, and Guatemala, and when Coqualeetza Hospital (for Aboriginal patients with tuberculosis) was still open in Sardis, he did much reparative ear and throat surgery there. The affection with which he was held by the Chilliwack General Hospital operating room nurses was demonstrated by their surprise dinner to honor his 80th birthday.

Dave enjoyed his family, his work, and nature. His congenial side was at its best with his friends on the golf links, or skiing from his second home in Glacier, Washington, or hunting ducks or geese on the Prairies. “No man liveth to himself alone,” and in this he received a full measure of help from a remarkable woman, his wife,

Marjorie. They understood each other. Dave deferred to her judgment and wise counsel and found her essential to his happiness. He leaves Marjorie, his six children—David, Donald, Michael, Kathleen, Lauren, and Judith—and grandchildren—Kenneth, Kristine, Mika, and Michael’s stepson, Jeremy.

His genuine, innate quality of candor was offset by a general personal kindness for which no trouble was too great. No one could have a friend with more enduring qualities.

—Henry Pauls, MD

—Archie Young, MDCM
Chilliwack

Dr Henry Dunn 1917–2009

Henry Dunn was the first pediatric neurologist in BC and a pioneer in Canada, being a founder of the Canadian Association of Child Neurologists and its first president.

Brought up in Germany in a Jewish family, he was sent to England as a teenager where he won a scholarship to enter medical school at Cambridge. His clinical training, at the London Hospital, was interrupted when he was interned as an enemy alien during the war. He was sent to a camp in Australia but managed to get back within 2 years. After he finished his training he was recruited as a medical officer in the British Army and had experience in India.

He then specialized in pediatrics and rose to the rank of senior registrar at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London. He spent a year in pathology at Babies and Children’s Hospital of New York before coming to Vancouver in 1954 as chief resident in pediatrics. After a brief period in practice he undertook further training in neurology at the Children’s Hospital in Boston, returning as one of the

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in memoriam

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first recruits to the UBC Pediatric Department.

Henry had a distinguished academic career and enjoyed an international reputation. He was a member of numerous professional advisory committees and chairman of several of them, he was president of the Canadian League Against Epilepsy, he was invited to lectureships and visiting professorships (one in Uganda) and to speak in China, and he sat on the editorial board of a Japanese journal. He won McLaughlin and Killam Fellowships, and he received the Ross Award of the Canadian Pediatric Society, the Coady Memorial Medal from the BC Medical Association, and a Career Achievement Award from BC Children's Hospital's research division.

He was an excellent teacher and he did important research. The range of topics in his publications was broad, but much of his work dealt with various aspects of developmental impairment. He made fundamental contributions to the understanding of biochemical disorders and genetic factors in causation, some of them amenable to correction. He was the director of a large, nationally funded study of children with low birth weight, extending over nearly 20 years and published as a book. In 1976 he was one of the first to document the ill-effects of maternal smoking on infant development. His first paper was published in 1944 and his last in 2002 (when he was 85 years old).

But it is as a clinician that Henry is most remembered by his colleagues. He was a perfectionist who believed in the most detailed histories and incredibly thorough physical examinations. His reports, extending over several pages, were models of excellence and were perhaps frustrating for students as they demonstrated a standard that seemed impossible to emulate.

Henry was an absolutely charming individual, tolerant of those whose standards fell short of his own. Always

polite and considerate, he was loved equally by medical colleagues, nurses and other allied professionals, students, and—perhaps most importantly—by his patients and their parents. He communicated quietly and precisely with them, achieving solid rapport and inspiring lasting trust.

He is sorely missed by his wife, Erica, by his two children, and by all who knew him.

—Robert Hill, MD
Vancouver

Dr John Egerton Hunt 1933–2008

John Hunt, born in 1933 to Leigh and Jean Hunt (nee Faulkner), was the eldest of three sons. John graduated from Prince of Wales High School in 1951 and then attended the University of British Columbia where he studied sciences and was awarded Big Block Awards in athletics for both rugby and football, an achievement not often matched. John followed his father into a career in medicine, and 2 years before he graduated in 1958 he married his high school sweetheart, Bev. Their journey together would span 52 years.

During his teenage years, John spent summers logging in Kitimat and Harrison Lake; these experiences gave him a taste of rural living, and after medical school John and Bev moved to Williams Lake where John spent 3 years in general practice. John was an enthusiastic hunter and angler in his adolescence, but his love of the outdoors flourished in the Cariboo. Even after returning to Vancouver in 1963 to pursue a career in orthopaedics, John's ties to the Cariboo remained strong, including regular hunting and fishing trips with family and friends. John introduced his brothers Brian and David to the Cariboo and they continue this tradition every September with the next generation. John's enthusiasm and ability to introduce new experiences to those around him was a unique gift.

To say John's residency was a rite of passage is an understatement. John, Bev, and the four kids spent 1 year in London, Ontario. This was a year characterized by personal and professional challenges that ultimately cemented John's decision to be a community physician whose approach to teaching was based on respect and humility and not authority and disparagement. In 1969 John and Bev moved to Coquitlam where John began a highly successful career that lasted 30 years. John had a passion for amateur athletics and volunteered much of his time as a team physician.

His career included many professional highlights, such as being president of the BC Surgical Society; however, at his retirement John said his finest accomplishment was his marriage to Bev and the raising of their four children. John and Bev retired to Gabriola Island in 1997, a place of good friends and terrific memories, where John could enjoy golfing and fishing at his leisure and visit with his eight grandchildren.

John lived life to the fullest. Moments were not squandered, and few could keep up with his zest for activities. John was happiest in the outdoors fishing and hunting, but he also enjoyed golfing, tennis, skiing, and playing hockey. Unfortunately, John developed diabetes and 7 years ago began dialysis for associated renal failure. Although John was slowed by his illness he approached it the same way as he did everything else, with courage and gusto. We all thought John feared death, but in the end it was life that he loved, and when life became inadequate he knew it was time to move onto the next adventure. He will be fondly remembered by those who knew him professionally but even more so by those who knew him as a family man, friend, and outdoorsman.

—Harold G. Hunt, MD
Victoria

in memoriam

Dr Aneez Shiraz Mohamed 1977–2009

With a heavy heart, we announce the passing of Dr Aneez Shiraz Mohamed. In his brief time on Earth, Aneez established himself as a dedicated professional, a loving son, and a friend to all.

Aneez was born in London, Ontario, but spent his formative years in Kamloops, British Columbia. It was in Kamloops that he excelled in athletics, academia, and the creative arts, graduating from Kamloops Secondary School at the top of his class in 1996. Aneez pursued further studies at the University of British Columbia, where he earned a bachelor of science in 2000 and a doctorate in medicine in 2004. After completing his internal medicine residency training at the University of Western Ontario, Aneez returned to the University of British Columbia in 2007 to begin his fellowship in cardiology. It is here that we came to know him. While few of us had known Aneez prior to his return to Vancouver, his personable and affable style made him a welcome addition to the cardiology program at UBC. He and his partner, Chanelle, had barely unpacked before they had welcomed us all into their new home, sharing their love of food and culture. Aneez was a tireless and selfless friend who always put others first. He was always the first to offer assistance when trouble befell anyone in our program. Perhaps most emblematic of his devotion to both his colleagues and patients was that, on numerous occasions, he showed up for work despite illness, lest he burden one of his colleagues by his absence. Needless to say, it took a great deal of convincing to persuade him to leave and look after himself.

Likewise he felt it necessary for physicians to play a greater role in the betterment of society. This past Christmas it was he and Chanelle who advocated the sponsorship of a local family in need by the cardiology training program. Similarly, in the wake of

the taser controversy, Aneez spearheaded a critical appraisal of the evidence surrounding taser use. As part of his grand rounds on the topic he was able to bring together the medical community and the Vancouver Police in an attempt to productively examine the use of tasers in British Columbia. At the time of his passing he was preparing a medical symposium on the topic.

In addition to being a well-respected and highly regarded clinician who genuinely cared about his patients, Aneez was a gifted researcher and educator. Over the past year and a half Aneez and I were able to publish multiple papers together, the most recent of which is in this issue of the *BCMJ*. At the time of his passing Aneez and I were midway through a medical education project he hoped would enable the University of British Columbia to facilitate top-level educational experiences in the face of medical school expansion to distributed sites. I feel fortunate to have been able to collaborate with such an intelligent individual.

As a group we feel fortunate to have known Aneez and will forever be grateful for the time we shared. From this life cut tragically short we can only take solace in the fact that Aneez left this world alongside his beloved Chanelle. Aneez is survived by mother Nasim, father Shiraz, and brothers Riaz and Rahim. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that a donation in Aneez's memory be made to the Aneez Mohamed Memorial Fund (c/o Britt Kujala, 9th Floor Cardiology, 2775 Laurel Street, Vancouver, BC V5Z 1M9).

— Jason Andrade, MD
On behalf of the
UBC Cardiology Fellows

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