

## Dr Gerry Bermann 1928–2008

Dr Gerry Bermann passed away on 12 June 2008 after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was just shy of his 80th birthday.

Gerry was an old-fashioned family doctor. He had a thriving office practice, looked after patients in hospital, did surgical assists, and made frequent house calls. He also had a thriving nursing-home practice at Youville and Louis Brier long-term care facilities. His main connection was with St. Vincent's Hospital in Vancouver, which he served in many capacities.

He had great respect for his profession and his colleagues. He valued his teachers, whom he frequently quoted. He had a regular group of specialists to which he referred most of his patients. In an era in which criticizing your co-workers is common, I never heard him make negative comments about any of his colleagues. He had that old-fashioned respect for other members of the medical profession.

Gerry was born in southwest Africa, which subsequently became the independent country of Namibia. Namibia was a former German colony, and when he lived there it was administered by South Africa. Although born in Windhoek, he went to boarding school in Cape Town and subsequently to medical school there.

After interning in Montreal, he returned to Windhoek where he practised for 5 years before coming to Vancouver. After a year of residency at Shaughnessy Hospital, he settled into practice in Vancouver. He continued to practice at 809 W. 41st Avenue for more than 35 years.

During his early years, his practice included minor surgical procedures and obstetrics. Later on, he gravitated more to geriatrics both in the office and in nursing homes. However, there

were always babies as well as seniors in his office. He never gave up doing house calls, especially visiting the housebound elderly. Even when his patients were under the care of other doctors, he would continue to make regular courtesy visits.

I was pleased to be his office colleague for many years. From him, I learned humility and respect for others. He taught me how to read ECGs, give cortisone injections, and look after hospital patients.

Gerry was a creature of habit. Tuesday was always his day off. Kathy Williams was his constant office receptionist and assistant. He met with the same group of people almost every morning at St. Vincent's Hospital in the cafeteria for morning coffee.

Surgery was one of his special interests. He performed operations when he worked in Windhoek. He continued to assist at surgeries for many years. Dr William Yu recounts the story that at one of his later surgeries, Gerry reported that he had received a letter stating that physicians had to stop assisting in the operating room at the age of 70. He gleefully responded, "This doesn't apply to me. I'm 77!"

Outside of the office, Gerry was a family man. He had a special relationship with Sheila, his wife of 34 years, and he was very attached to his mother-in-law and father-in-law. These relationships were especially important to him because he didn't have a large family of his own.

He was a doting father. I suspect that he would have given anything to his children. He bragged that his son Bob made the best steak and frites in Toronto. His daughters Simone and Cindy doted on him and he on them. He was especially enamoured with his five grandchildren. Although his children and grandchildren lived in New York, Toronto, and Winnipeg, distance

did not dim their close relationship.

Dietitian friend Linda Lim recalled, "He had an absolute passion for hockey. Not only did he know all the Canucks players, their strengths and weaknesses, but he was equally conversant about players on other teams. Many mornings were spent dissecting the previous night's game or strategizing for the next game. We were always sure that any day the Canucks GM would be phoning him to take on coaching duties."

In the end, he fought his battle with cancer with dignity and courage. When sitting at the restaurant in Queen Elizabeth Park, we encouraged him to have a drink of wine with us. He initially thought that this would be incompatible with his recent chemotherapy, but, after a while, he threw caution to the wind and joined us in a glass of wine as we wished each other good health. Near the end, when he had become more frail, he insisted on going upstairs in his house to use the upstairs bathroom rather than the main floor bathroom, much to the chagrin of his wife Sheila.

Gerry Bermann was a unique individual. He didn't see snow until he was in his 20s, but became an ardent hockey fan. He hailed from that little-known country of Namibia and could get excited when my mother's cruise ship stopped there in Walvis Bay. He kept practising medicine long after most of his colleagues had retired. He was bright, inquisitive, and charming until the end.

According to friend Dr Les Sheldon, Gerry cited his greatest accomplishment as never having had a complaint about him submitted to the College of Physicians and Surgeons in 50 years of practice. What a great legacy for the rest of us.

—Larry Barzelai, MD  
Vancouver

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### **Dr Frederick Edward Bryans 1924–2009**

Dr Fred Bryans died on 11 March 2009.

Fred received his formal medical education at the University of Toronto (MD 1946, followed by residency training in obstetrics and gynecology), Harvard University (graduate research), and at leading cancer treatment centres in Europe.

Dr Bryans spent his professional career as a geographic full-time faculty member in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of British Columbia. In 1954, at the age of 30, he was appointed assistant professor. In 1960, at the youthful age of 36, he became professor and chairman of the department, a post in which he served with distinction until 1978. During his 18 years as department head, he laid the foundation and prepared the department for its future development. Fred related well to a wide range of very different people. He appointed faculty from strikingly different backgrounds and was supportive and appreciative of their diversity. Fred fostered a unique, supportive environment within the department with a friendly and collegial atmosphere among faculty, trainees, and supporting staff members. There was a surprising lack of hierarchy, which made going to work truly a pleasure. Education and research endeavors were supremely important and valued. He retired from his university position in 1989 but remained active in departmental and university affairs until shortly before his death.

Fred received many important awards and had numerous accomplishments during his distinguished career as teacher, academic, and practising obstetrician and gynecologist. Graduating classes of the UBC Medical School honored him with Best Educator awards. Dr Bryans was also

a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal.

His publications included scholarly works on endocrinology, cancer, congenital abnormalities, urinary incontinence, and other areas. His most recent work was started in 2004 at the age of 80 when he began the daunting task of writing the book documenting the history of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and some aspects of the specialty in the early days of the University of British Columbia Medical School, published in 2005. This book is yet another of Fred's many gifts to the department.

Dr Bryans remained the accomplished generalist who excelled in the practical as well as academic aspects of our specialty. As trainees we were impressed with his management of challenging obstetrical and surgical cases referred to the professor by colleagues from all areas of the province—truly a testament to his stature as clinician, obstetrician, and the gifted surgeon that he was. Through his role as an outstanding educator and planner as well as a distinguished and accomplished physician, he contributed significantly to the care of the women of British Columbia in a career spanning two generations.

At the national and international levels, Fred served on the council and committees of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, he was a founding member and president of the Association of Professors of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of Canada (APOG), vice president of the Association of Professors of Gynaecology and Obstetrics in the United States (APGO-USA), vice president of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), and fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (UK).

Fred always had the interest of his department, students, trainees, colleagues, and patients foremost. He was a man of modesty and the highest

integrity. In addition to all his many qualities, we learned and benefited from his wisdom, common sense, good judgment, sense of ethics, fairness, and generosity.

Fred married Jane in 1975. They shared a loving, joyful, fulfilling life with a mutual devotion to the outdoors, hiking in the mountains and backcountry. Throughout his terminal illness, Jane was a stalwart and devoted companion who helped, nursed, and supported him.

If there is a single acclaimed and enduring attribute of Fred Bryans, it is that he was the ultimate gentleman and scholar who led by example. He left these legacies to his trainees, colleagues, and family who have been so fortunate to have known him and to have been influenced by him.

—**Basil Ho Yuen, MBCChB**

—**Peter McComb, MBBS  
Vancouver**

### **Dr James C. (Jim) Osborne 1923–2008**

Jim Osborne passed away in his sleep at home on 30 August 2008. Jim was an avid skier and windsurfer and a folk music enthusiast.

He obtained his MD from the University of Manitoba in 1946. That summer Jim and his new bride Wanda went to Pangnirtung on Baffin Island where Jim served as the only medical doctor in the eastern Arctic for 4 years, making house calls via dogsled with his ever-faithful guide and companion Eetowanga. His and Wanda's first two children were born during that time, Jim honing his obstetrical skills. His fondness for the harmonica and his cheerful nature served him well during their time on Baffin Island.

Jim and his young family returned south to Edmonton where he began specialty training in general surgery at the Royal Alex and Charles Camsel hospitals under the tutelage of the late Dr Walter Anderson. In 1956 Jim and Wanda moved to Kamloops with their

growing family and he joined the Irving Clinic. They subsequently moved to Vancouver's North Shore, and Jim entered practice at Lions Gate Hospital as a general surgeon with an interest in thoracic surgery. He soon joined forces with Dr Bill Arber and later with Dr Bill Fenn. Although not one to seek notoriety, Jim served the medical community as an outstanding chief of surgery and subsequently chief of staff at Lions Gate Hospital.

Jim's joy of life was expressed in his family, his love of music, and a passion for skiing and windsurfing. In 1998 (at the age of 75) he skied 89 days at Whistler. One of his proudest personal achievements was receiving the Old Guy Award at the Dave Murray Ski Camp at age 78. He was exceedingly proud of his grandson, Manuel Osborne-Paradis, one of Canada's World Cup downhill Olympic hopefuls, who Jim first taught to ski. Windsurfing in Aruba was another of Jim's accomplishments late in life.

It took some doing to catch one on Jim Osborne, but he was totally floored when he entered the formal banquet as president of the BC Surgical Society in Penticton in 1972 to find a life-sized cutout of himself modeling for the Eaton's catalogue in a suit of long underwear. It was a highlight of his medical school days.

Jim leaves behind a loving family of seven children and his wife, Wanda, as well as one stepdaughter, 15 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and his close companion of 9 years, Irene Hart. Jim will be fondly remembered by his colleagues and associates and his many, many grateful patients.

—Norman Hamilton, MD  
West Vancouver

### Dr David McDonald Cardwell 1933–2009

Our dad and loving husband, David McDonald Cardwell, passed away peacefully on 27 March 2009 at home in Parksville after a long battle with cancer. He was predeceased by his parents, William and Eva, and his brother, Peter. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Paddy; children, Steve (Maryann), Jim (Jackie), and Sarah (Kelli); and six grandchildren, Stephanie, Michael, Andrew, Mackenzie, Ingrid, and Kai.

David was born on 7 December 1933 in Batley, Yorkshire, England. He attended Batley Grammar School before completing his medical degrees at Leeds and London Universities. After serving as an emergency room physician in Huddersfield, he became a partner in a practice in Batley. In 1971 David moved with his family to Canada, taking up practice for 18 years in Salmo and Nelson, where he was chief of staff for a time at Nelson Hospital. During that time he was active in the community, including many years as a member of the Salmo Lions Club. Dad also found time to coach the Salmo juvenile boys' soccer team to become the West Kootenay champions. In 1989 David and Paddy moved to Parksville, where David continued as a general practitioner as part of the Parksville Medical Clinic. Toward the end of his long career, David served as chief of staff at the Trillium and Arrowsmith Seniors Lodges. Until a few years ago he was a member and then conductor of the Arrowsmith Singers.

David was a well-respected, caring, and supportive doctor and friend



*Dr David McDonald Cardwell  
1933–2009*

to many. One could not go down the street with him without someone saying, "Hello, Doctor Dave." He would still make house calls and was available at all hours of the day and night. We recall the times, in Salmo especially, when he would be called out to medical emergencies—even delivering babies on Christmas Day. He is remembered as a kind, compassionate, warm, and fun-loving person, always ready with a joke (he had a never-ending store of parrot jokes). He touched the lives of so many people. He had a special place in his heart for dogs, and they always loved him too! He will be greatly missed by the family.

A memorial service in celebration of David's life was held at Yates Funeral Home in Parksville on Saturday, 4 April 2009.

—Paddy Cardwell  
Parksville

### In Memoriam photos

The *BCMJ* now accepts good quality head and shoulders photos in its In Memoriam department. Please provide high resolution photos of 300 pixels per inch or higher. Please submit obituaries and photos to [journal@bcma.bc.ca](mailto:journal@bcma.bc.ca).