

## Dr Thomas Frank Handley 1936–2012

Dr Tom Handley died on 9 January 2012 after a 12-year struggle with prostatic cancer. True to character, his wish, as expressed to his family, was for his passing to be quiet, without fanfare and publicity. Notwithstanding that wish, he rightly deserves to be remembered.

Tom Handley received his medical degree from the University of Birmingham, England, in 1959. Subsequent to postgraduate training, he practised as a general practitioner in Birmingham from 1960 to 1966, after which he and his family moved to Vancouver to continue his career. Tom completed a 6-month residency at Shaughnessy Hospital in Vancouver and wrote his Medical Council of Canada exams, leading to licensure for independent practice in BC in July of 1967. After a year or two of association in practice with a local general practitioner, Tom established his own practice in New Westminister. His significant clinical and administrative talents, together with his obvious dedication to all aspects of medical practice, were soon recognized, and he became involved in various aspects of medical staff functions at Royal Columbian Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital in New Westminister. This included a year as president of the medical staff at Royal Columbian Hospital in the late 1970s. He was elected to represent Burnaby, New Westminister, and the Fraser Valley as a member on the Council of the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons. He continued in that position for two 4-year terms, including a year as president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1979–1980.

In 1984 Tom was asked to consider a position at the College as deputy registrar. With some reluctance, Tom left his patients and clinical practice

but soon embraced the challenges and responsibilities at the College. After 4 years as deputy registrar, in 1988 Tom became the College's registrar and continued in that position until his retirement in 2000. During his time at the College, Tom was a member of the Medical Council of Canada, and of the Executive Committee of the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada, and was president of the latter organization. His experience and wisdom were recognized by medical regulatory organizations throughout Canada and his sage advice was frequently sought by many.

Tom was a dedicated physician who always promoted the principles of professionalism and medical ethics at every opportunity. Those who knew him will recall that he always kept a folded copy of the CMA Code of Ethics in his inside suit pocket so that it could be referred to and quoted when the occasion demanded it. In his role as registrar, he ardently promoted what he termed "excellence in medical practice" and was intolerant of substandard practice and unprofessional behavior. In maintaining medical standards, he was unsupportive of most aspects of alternative medicine, which he termed "quackery" and thereby always promoted evidence-based medicine. He was disappointed in what he observed to be a gradual attrition of professional principles and behavior in physicians and frequently made written or verbal pleas for a reversal of this trend.

Tom was a student of history, especially medical history. Those who knew him will recall his calm interjections into a discussion or debate to provide a historical perspective in attempts to resolve the issue.

As registrar, Tom Handley guided the College's transformation from a relatively small organization involved mainly in medical licensure and com-

plaint management to a multifaceted regulatory body with wide-ranging additional responsibilities in physician assessment, facility accreditation, diagnostic facility oversight, maintenance of competence programs for physicians, credentialing, guidelines and standard establishment, and other emerging regulatory responsibilities. Notwithstanding the significant administrative responsibilities, Tom remained a family doctor at heart, always promoting the consideration of patient and public need as the primary objective and requirement for a physician and for the College. Tom was unwavering in his and the College's commitment to act in the public interest and to protect the public from substandard or inappropriate medical practice while at the same time protecting and enhancing what he frequently termed "the honor and dignity of the profession."

Tom has left behind his wife, Rita, and his son and daughter, grandchildren, and extended family. He will be sorely missed by them, but also by his colleagues and friends. Tom was a mentor to me and many others. He will be missed, but his legacy will remain.

—**Morris VanAndel, MD**  
Vancouver

### Did you know this physician?

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**BCMj**  
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**Recently deceased physicians**

The following physicians died over the past several months; please consider submitting a piece for our “In Memoriam” section in the *BCMJ* if you knew the deceased well.

- Ashmore, Dr Philip
- Binnie, Dr James Percy Kennedy
- D’Appolonia, Dr Gino Leone
- Fassaert, Dr Hubert Anton Bernard
- Fitterman, Dr Herbert Norton
- Graham, Dr Donald Carter
- Grandsen, Dr Godfrey McCance
- Greig, Dr James Henry
- Hancock, Dr Alan Keith
- Hogan, Dr John Thomas
- Howden, Dr Gordon David Galbraith
- Hudson, Dr Peter William
- Kellett, Dr John Robert
- Kettyls, Dr George Donald Morison
- Lane, Dr John Samuel Purefoy
- Lazarchuk, Dr Myron
- Lowe, Dr Benny
- Makaroff, Dr Robert Peter
- Martin, Dr John David
- Mason, Dr Bernard Lines
- McCann, Dr James Alan
- Mellor, Dr Clive Sidney
- Middlemass, Dr Ian Burnet
- Murray, Dr Patrick J.
- Penny, Dr Helen Angela
- Pronger, Dr Ralph Clifton
- Randall, Dr Herbert Samuel
- Roach, Dr Mark
- Rogers, Dr Roger Hayward
- Sargent, Dr Raymond Denys Richmo
- Shimizu, Dr Keiji
- St. Louis, Henri Edgar
- Wong, Dr Ting-Kwok Lawrence

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“I understand what you’re saying... I just can’t remember it when I get home.”

In stressful situations, and clinical encounters are often stressful for patients, even the most attentive will miss some key information. Since modern medical practice is increasingly a partnership between clinician and patient, discussion and understanding are crucial. High-quality consumer health resources, both in print and online, help busy clinicians and patients stay on the same page. The library section of the College website ([www.cpsbc.ca](http://www.cpsbc.ca)) provides a suggested list under “Patient Information,” including local organizations like HealthLinkBC and Vancouver Coastal Health. These sites have extensive collections of topics, and not only do they give a local perspective, they come in a number of languages. Another free, authoritative, multi-language site, supported by the US National Institutes of Health, is MedlinePlus. This site includes information on drugs, alternative medicine, and many other topics; tutorials; and

links to other reliable sources. For patient leaflets and handouts, physicians may go to the American Academy of Family Physicians’ Family-Doctor.org website or log in to MD Consult or AccessMedicine. MD Consult has the added benefit of allowing clinicians to customize pamphlets to include the physician’s name, address, and additional patient instructions.

Your patients may prefer to do their own Internet searching for health information. To help them evaluate the quality of a site, a useful guide is to look for the Health on the Net symbol on the site’s home page. This symbol indicates that the site follows the quality-control guidelines developed by the HON Foundation, a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization founded to ensure ethical standards for online medical information. HON certification is another way to differentiate between good quality sites and those with strictly commercial motives.

—Karen MacDonell  
 —Robert Melrose  
 —Judy Neill  
**Library Co-managers**

*This article is the opinion of the Library of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC and has not been peer reviewed by the BCMJ Editorial Board.*

*Continued from page 67*

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