



## **Dr Phillip Godfrey Ashmore 1926–2011**

Phil Ashmore passed away peacefully on 1 September 2011 at the age of 85. Born and raised in BC, he retained a great love of the Interior, especially the Bridge River Valley and Bralorne, along with their inhabitants.

He graduated in medicine at the University of Toronto in 1948 and, after a short spell as a country GP in Bralorne, he returned to train in surgery. There he came under the influence of Dr Bill Mustard, and this led him to develop an interest in pediatric surgery, particularly the treatment of cardiac anomalies.

He subsequently gained an overseas fellowship in London with Sir Russell Brock in thoracic surgery and paid weekly visits to the Children's Hospital in Great Ormond Street to be with David Waterson, who was a world pioneer in pediatric cardiac surgery.

He returned to Vancouver and established a practice in pediatric general and cardiac surgery. In 1957, along with Dr Peter Allen, he performed the first open heart operation in Vancouver. Phil went on to promote and establish pediatric surgery as a separate

specialty in Vancouver, and along with three colleagues, created first a division, then a full department. Throughout this time, he provided encouragement, stimulus, and warm friendship to these individuals, to which I can attest.

His was a huge influence in the building of a new separate children's hospital, and after moving to it in 1982, he concentrated solely on his cardiac work.

Allied to his professional success, Phil possessed a most engaging personality and a huge sense of humor. An accomplished musician and entertainer, he claimed, "I never saw a microphone that I didn't like!"

In his later years, his health began to deteriorate, but he was blessed with a very supportive family who saw that he enjoyed his regular outings with his beloved dog Kerry.

A true pioneer, a great surgeon, and a wonderful character, he will be sorely missed, but his achievements will live on in his specialty and in children at large.

—**Graham C. Fraser, MD  
Vancouver**

## **Dr Ronald J. Hancock 1930–2011**

It is with a heavy heart I wish to respectfully advise of the passing of my father, Dr Ronald J. Hancock, a general surgeon in Vancouver. He succumbed, with cruel irony, to one of the worst enemies against which he fought valiantly with so many patients. He passed with peace on 31 December 2011.

Ron was born in London, England, on 2 November 1930 and was orphaned in infancy, then later placed in foster care for his early years. He was transported in 1938 to Fairbridge Farm School in Duncan, where he grew to be a healthy, independent, and sturdy young man. He excelled at Penticton

High School, winning a provincial scholarship to enter UBC, where he achieved a BA (Hons.) in English and his MD, Class of 1957. With general surgery residencies in Vancouver and England, his FRCS was realized in 1963. A prominent and busy surgical career followed, and he held significant posts as president of the BC Surgical Society, head of surgery at Shaughnessy Hospital, and clinical professor of surgery at UBC, where he taught for 30 years. He was a most capable and masterful surgeon, saving and improving literally thousands of lives. He also had the gift of making very difficult procedures appear smooth and effortless, and put everyone in the operating theatre at ease, especially students and residents. I was privileged to scrub with him on many occasions.

He received many teaching awards, and was liked by all and loved by many. Ron was an instrumental and formative influence in the careers of many of today's active BC surgeons, and hundreds who chose other directions in the profession.

Ron also had a very active social and leisure life. He had a beautiful timbre to his baritone voice and sang with joy at many recitals, weddings, and gatherings, as well as singing *O Canada* at Canucks hockey games and on stage at Malkin Bowl with Theatre Under The Stars in Stanley Park. In the operating room he was respectfully referred to as "the singing surgeon" by many who worked with him. Ron was very involved for many decades with the Vancouver Opera Association, including serving on the board of directors, and he seldom missed a performance.

Next to music and song, golf was his primary passion—he was an avid player and member of Shaughnessy for over 4 decades, where he apexed at a two handicap. He played all over

the world with foursomes of his closest friends and was in his element on any course. He was almost boyish with exuberance on the first tee of any round. I also had the honor of his companionship and guidance on hundreds of occasions on the links. Members and staff of the Shaughnessy Golf and Country Club will not forget his magnificent persona.

Ron is survived by his loving wife Chinami and their son Myles; by his first wife Patricia and their children Sandra, John, Sharon, Michele, and Sylvia; and 10 grandchildren. He is missed by countless others.

His life was full, and he lives on in his many fortunate descendants. We, unlike him, know where our roots began.

I know the gates are open for you Poppa.

—**R. John Hancock, MD**  
Parksville

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www.fpon.ca, or contact Gail Compton at 604 707-6367.

**WORKSAFEBC ANNUAL PHYSICIAN CONF**

**Nanaimo, 20 Oct (Sat)**

Hold that date! The 13th annual Work-SafeBC Physician Conference will be held in beautiful Nanaimo, BC. We hope to see you there! For more information, contact Jocelyne Fidyk at 604 231-8651, toll free 1 877 231-8765, fax 604 279-7698, e-mail Jocelyne.Fidyk@worksafebc.com.

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Financial Post columnist &  
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