



## Dr Gur Sharan Singh 1936–2015

Dr Gur Sharan Singh was born on 25 September 1936 in the city of Jullundur, Punjab, India. He earned his medical degree at Punjab University, India, in 1959 and trained in neurosurgery at the University of Rochester in New York, Queen's University in Ontario, and at McGill University in Montreal. After a short period in Victoria, he established a busy and extensive neurosurgery practice in Kamloops in 1967, which is where he and his family settled and have lived to date. Dr Singh was the first neurosurgeon to work in British Columbia's Interior. He developed an extensive practice in spine surgery and had a referral practice from neighboring provinces and many US states.

Dr Singh wound up his full-time practice in 1993 but continued his consulting and surgical assist work for many years after retirement. He served as a member of WorkSafeBC's Medical Review Panel and as medical member to the Canada Pension Plan Tribunal in 1997. During his years of practice, Dr Singh participated and played a leadership role in the professional affairs of neurosurgery practice, serving for the Section of

Neurosurgery and as director of the neuro-services unit at Royal Inland Hospital. Later in life Dr Singh was asked to come back to Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops as the medical chief of staff.

Besides dealing with a busy and demanding practice, Dr Singh devoted time and energy toward making a contribution to the profession. I had the honor of working with Gur during his very active leadership role with Doctors of BC (then BCMA). He was a member of the executive and served as president of the association for 1991–1992. It was during that year that Dr Singh's leadership qualities became evident when the profession was faced with difficult threats of some draconian legislative challenges. Dr Singh worked with the Board of Directors, his executive team, and staff to mobilize the profession and mount a major challenge to the proposed legislation. His leadership was supported and appreciated by the profession, as evidenced by a 2000-strong packed rally at the Vancouver Convention Centre, which gave him several rousing and standing ovations. I had the distinct privilege to be with Gur during negotiations, and his firm but fair hand remained a guiding post throughout that year. His sense of fairness, honesty, and integrity was paramount to a successful outcome. Patients and the profession were well served during that trying year. He will be remembered by us all for that great contribution along with his policy development work at the association. Dr Singh was also founding chair of the Council on Health Economics and Policy. The profession is stronger and better because of his foresight and leadership in these areas. His contribution of bringing successful closure to registered pension benefits for the profession is a lasting legacy.

Gur was also a talented athlete and

took an active interest in sports; he especially enjoyed tennis. He served as president of the Kamloops Tennis Club and he could often be found at Kamloops Blazers games along with his son. He took on golf with gusto and established a local golf tournament fundraiser. The event has raised over \$1.25 million for the Kamloops Brain Injury Association. He and his family supported many local community organizations, giving their time as volunteers. He volunteered at the 1993 Canada Summer Games and chaired the Rotary Club and Heart and Stroke Foundation's projects on smoke-free schools.

Gur was a devoted family man and had the full support of his wife, Manju, and their children, Sabina and Arjun, for all his work. I vividly remember the September 1991 issue of the *BCMJ* when both Manu and Gur were featured on the cover. His friends, colleagues, and family were enriched, and he will be missed by us all. Rest in peace my brother and friend.

— Arun Kumar Garg, MD  
New Westminster

## Recently deceased physicians

If a BC physician you knew well is recently deceased, consider submitting a piece for our "In Memoriam" section in the *BCMJ*. Include the deceased's dates of birth and death, full name and the name the deceased was best known by, key hospital and professional affiliations, relevant biographical data, and a high-resolution photo. Please limit your submission to a maximum of 500 words. Send the content and photo by e-mail to [journal@doctorsofbc.ca](mailto:journal@doctorsofbc.ca).

## in memoriam



### Dr Terry Sparling 1947–2015

The irony that Dr Terry Sparling died from a rapidly progressive cancer was not lost on his close friends because Terry had devoted his medical career to caring for patients with cancer. An enormous number of his patients, but probably only a small number of his colleagues, really appreciated the significant influence that Dr Sparling had on the development of cancer services in British Columbia.

Dr Sparling was the director of medical oncology at Shaughnessy Hospital in the 1980s and took that clinic to the Burnaby Hospital in the 1990s. During those years he was also a consultant to the BC Cancer Agency and Vancouver General Hospital, and he played a major role in the development of the internal medicine programs in both Shaughnessy and Burnaby Hospitals. He was on the Board of Directors of the Seymour Medical Clinic in Vancouver and, from 1988 to 1993, was head of the Division of Hematology/Oncology at UBC Hospital.

Dr Sparling completed his premed at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick, medicine at Queen's University in Ontario, and was awarded FRCPC in internal medicine in 1977 and FRCPC in hematology in 1978. He was a diplomate of the American Board of Internal

Medicine, had academic and teaching responsibilities with UBC's Faculty of Medicine from 1977, and was a clinical associate professor of medicine at the time of his death.

His career included clinical research, teaching, and administration, and he was even a visiting scholar to the San Diego Hospice and Palliative Care Program. His achievements included heading the Division of Medical Oncology at the Sheikh Khalifa Medical City, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 2000 to 2006 and, maybe because he was an ardent sailor, he followed that up as chief of oncology for the Bermuda Hospitals Board.

Most of my personal memories of Terry stem from our days on the BC Medical Association Cancer Committee, and later when he was a vocal part of the BC Cancer Agency network of community cancer clinics. As a founding member of the BC Cancer Agency, the then-BCMA—through its Cancer Committee—was on the BC Cancer Agency Board and played a major role in its every decision until that bond was removed in the 2000s.

Dr Sparling was a champion of patient-centred care before that term became popular, and he was always willing to voice his rather strong opinions about how cancer services should be delivered in this province. Through his care, his clinics, his teaching, and his strong voice on the Cancer Committee, Dr Terry Sparling had a significant influence on cancer patient care in British Columbia.

—Jack Chritchley, MD  
Vancouver

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