

Dr Charles Rally 1928–2017



Dr Charles Rally, known to all as Charlie, passed away from surgical complications on 16 November 2017. Charlie was born on 1 September 1928 in North Vancouver. Some years before, his parents had emigrated from France and set up homestead near Savona, BC. They moved to the Lower Mainland prior to Charlie's birth. His early schooling was at St. Edmonds in North Vancouver and later at Kitsilano High School, where he graduated at the tender age of 15. He attended UBC for undergraduate work and considered becoming an optometrist. His father, thinking that optometry required going to medical school, sent him to McGill where he graduated second in his class in 1952. Postgraduate work in Montreal and Vancouver resulted in his entering practice in Vancouver with G.F. Strong, Don Monroe, and Bruce Paige. Cardiology was his specialty, but he excelled in all fields of internal medicine.

In the practice of medicine, Charlie's clinical acumen was outstanding, as many can attest. I personally remember discussing with him a complex case that had me puzzled. In a short few minutes of consideration, he presented a clear and precise solution. His dedication to and respect for all his patients and his gentle and

thoughtful nature were displayed to all he met. Being a quiet man, he never presented an overbearing approach, but whatever he said was notable and well thought out.

Charlie was involved in the Division of Cardiology at Vancouver General Hospital, but he also worked at Shaughnessy Hospital and taught medical students at UBC. Other work activities involved being the medical director or underwriter for many of Canada's insurance companies. The knowledge gained from this work made him an expert in life expectancy statistics, and he was frequently consulted in this area.

Despite his dedication to medicine, Charlie always found time for his family. In Montreal he met Rose, the true love of his life, and she remained so until his recent death. She told me the following story, which speaks to his medical expertise.

A short time after being introduced to Charlie, Rose was walking down a street in Montreal when she ran into him. Charlie was then a third-year medical student at McGill. They started discussing the unusually hot weather and the fact, she felt, that it had given her a heat rash. Charlie immediately said, "That is not a heat rash; you have chicken pox." He was correct. Whether that encounter sealed the deal or not, they eventually married and remained so for 64 years.

Charlie and Rose had four children: Anne, Charles Jr., Elisabeth, and David. From them came 14 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. The family was a unit and even after the children grew up and had progeny of their own, Saturday night always meant dinner at the Rallys'. Each summer was spent in Vernon with children and grandchildren. In 1999, a property was purchased on Kalamalka Lake where all could vacation together. The bonds formed with the

cousins speak to the success of family life at the Rallys'.

Charlie had many other activities at which he excelled. He was an expert gardener, superior wallpaper hanger, bird-watcher, and traveler. He loved tennis and routinely dismissed my efforts. Monday nights were reserved for a bridge group that started in 1966 and continued until 2001. One of the best players, and Charlie's dearest friend, was David Bachop. After David's death in 1988, Charlie, along with John Ankenman and Don Farquhar, was instrumental in setting up the Dr David M. Bachop Gold Medal for Distinguished Medical Service given out by Doctors of BC to a BC doctor who has made an extraordinary contribution in the field of organized medicine and/or community service.

Fishing, too, was a passion since childhood. Visits to Bella Coola, during which he often included his children who also loved to fish, allowed Charlie to combine his talents as a physician with those as a fisherman, and gave him some valuable dad-time as well. With these visits, he provided expert medical care to this underserved area, while reaping the benefits of well-stocked streams.

Traveling was also important to Charlie and Rose, but not to popular and frequented places: they visited countries most would not consider. As Rose will tell you, she has been to the Khyber Pass in Afghanistan and to West Africa, slept in yurts in Uzbekistan, and ridden up winding roads in Yemen, but she has never been to Paris.

With Charlie's passing, we have lost an intelligent, passionate, caring physician: one of the old-fashioned types who was loved by patients, colleagues, and friends. I feel privileged to have known him.

—**Michael Moscovich, MD**
Campbell River