

## Dr W.R.J. (Bill) Martin 1927–2017



It is with much sadness I write of the passing of my friend, a long-time colleague, Dr W.R.J. (Bill) Martin on 26 December 2017. Bill passed away peacefully in his home on Galiano Island surrounded by his beloved family. He was predeceased by his wife, Gwen, and leaves his four children, Shelley, Sandy, Craig, and Scott and their families. He also leaves two surviving siblings and numerous nieces and nephews.

Bill practised ophthalmology in Burnaby for over 30 years in conjunc-

tion with a long-term partnership with Drs Jack Siddall, Sam Gibson, Don Matheson, and later Drs Bill Pratt and Larry Daitz. Bill always put the interest of his patients first and practised medicine with a high degree of skill and integrity. Bill and Gwen were active in the medical community in Burnaby, and Bill was given a long-term service medal by Burnaby Hospital in recognition of his many years of service to that institution and the community.

Bill was born and raised in Burnaby. He and his siblings grew up during the Great Depression when money and work was scarce. Nevertheless, after the war, Bill attended the University of Oregon and UBC where he met and married the love of his life, Gwen, a romance that lasted over 60 years.

Bill was a member of the first graduating class of the medical school at UBC in 1954. He did a few years of practice with his boyhood friend, Dr Hugh Pontifex, mostly in Merritt. He loved the challenges of bringing modern medicine to what was then an isolated community.

Bill took his eye training at Vancouver General in the late 1950s, and during his residency, he was instrumental in assisting the new professor of ophthalmology, Dr AJ Elliot, in modernizing and expanding the department at Vancouver General Hospital and UBC.

Bill and Gwen retired to Galiano Island in 1991 and quickly adapted to island life. Bill spent a few years as a consultant in ophthalmology for the Workers' Compensation Board. He and Gwen traveled widely, and Bill indulged in his lifelong passion of woodworking producing many beautiful grandfather clocks and guitars, which are now family treasures.

Bill lost his beloved Gwen in 2011. His health began a slow decline and he left us gently in the last days of 2017 in his 91st year.

Bill was a man of high intelligence, great kindness, and integrity. He adored his family, and his family adored him. His was a life well lived.

Rest in peace, my friend.

—D.C. Matheson, MD, FRCSC  
North Vancouver

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