

ting a path through the jungle of pain management.

**Competing interests**

None declared.

**References**

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**Dr Neil Carlisle Barber  
1934–2018**



Dr Neil Carlisle Barber, 84, of Creston, BC, passed away peacefully, embraced by his family, on 2 November 2018. Born in Manchester, England, Neil attended Cambridge University and qualified as a medical doctor in 1959. He and his young family then spent 3 years in northern Kenya, where he served diligently as the only doctor for a remote area. After also working as a doctor in Swansea, Wales, for 2 years, Neil and his family immigrated to Quesnel, BC, in 1965. Neil embraced the Cariboo and it embraced him. He devoted the remainder of his medical career to this region, specializing as an internist and becoming a founding member of the International College of Hospice/Palliative Care in 1995, where he was instrumental in bringing a multibed hospice unit to Quesnel. He is fondly remembered by patients and medical staff alike as a gentle, intelligent, devoted doctor who treated everyone with compassion, grace, and strength. Neil retired in 2002, and in 2008 he and his wife, Eva, moved to Creston, BC, where he continued his commitment to palliative care by serving on the local Hospice Society Board and successfully bringing two hospice rooms to the Creston Valley Hospital.

Neil is survived by his daughter, Theresa (David) Metzger, and his

sons, Marcus (Janice) Barber and James (Ila) Barber. He is also survived by his sisters, Julie (Richard) Williams and Linda Allatini (Anthony) Wilson and his grandsons, Wes (Alaina), Daniel, Michael, William, and Jon. Neil joins his beloved wife of 60 years, Eva, who passed away in 2017.

A special thank you to the nurses and doctors at the Creston Valley Hospital, and to Father Sylvester Obi Ibekwe of the Holy Cross Catholic Church, for their loving care and support during Neil's final days. Funeral services were held at the Holy Cross Catholic Church in Creston on 23 November ([www.gfoliverfuneralchapel.com/notices/Neil-Barber](http://www.gfoliverfuneralchapel.com/notices/Neil-Barber)). Neil was laid to rest beside Eva at the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Creston, BC. Memorial donations may be made to the Eva and Neil Barber Memorial Fund at the Creston-Kootenay Foundation, Box 701, Creston, BC, V0B 1G0 (proceeds to benefit the Creston Valley Hospital palliative care rooms) or to the Holy Cross Catholic Church at Box 299, Creston, BC, V0B 1G0.

—Theresa Metzger, BSc  
Camano Island, WA

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**Recently deceased physicians**

If a BC physician you knew well is recently deceased, consider submitting a piece for our "Obituaries" 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).

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### **Dr James Alan Pretty 1945–2018**



Dr James Alan Pretty passed away peacefully at Irene Thomas Hospice on 1 August 2018. Alan was courageous and graceful in facing death from a glioblastoma multiforme. His dignity in death was a reflection of his life as a son, brother, husband, father, physician, leader, teacher, colleague, and friend.

Alan graduated from UBC in 1970 at the top of his medical class. He interned in San Diego. He studied internal medicine at VGH and in Edinburgh before he was lured into family practice, initially as a locum, at Hilltop Medical in White Rock in 1973. In a very short time, Hilltop Medical and the Peace Arch Hospital community recognized that an exceptional individual had arrived. He settled into the community with ease. Despite his extraordinary intellect he always treated his fellow physicians as equals (even though we were not). He was a physician role model. He was an excellent listener, compassionate to his patients, and a good communicator. His clinical medicine was above reproach, and his patients loved him. Medicine was his passion. He spent several years as medical director at Peace Arch Hospital and always had the respect of his fellow physicians, administrators, and the hospital board. He was able to navigate those treacherous waters without compromise but with respect from all sides.

Alan recognized early that computerization of medical records was important in good quality medical care. As a result he was instrumental in Hilltop Medical becoming fully computerized by 1997, well ahead of the curve across Canada. He was on the steering committee of the software company developing medical records for computers in those early days, and he took university computer programming classes to better understand the process, often with classmates 20 or more years younger. During the twilight years of his medical career, Alan traveled to the Northwest Territories to work as a locum (mainly in Hay River). He came to adore the North, with its beauty and solitude, and the northern communities' culture and ambience. When Alan traveled he always made enduring friends, and this included the medical, nursing, and support staff in the North. He embraced frontier medicine.

Early to rise and never one to waste a moment, Alan had many impressive interests outside of medicine. He learned to sail in San Diego, and this skill took him to the South Pacific into the treacherous waters off Indonesia and Southeast Asia. He was away for a number of months on a small sailboat with one other adventurous soul. He was a skillful woodworker and built furniture and kayaks. He planned and built his own homes. He spent many hours kayaking off BC's coast with friends. He was an expert skier. He was on the ski patrol at local mountains and enjoyed the Whistler terrain. He was a naturally talented painter. He was a scuba diver.

Alan traveled extensively both with his family and as a volunteer physician in Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia with organizations delivering care to the less fortunate of our world. During these times he would take Spanish classes, sometimes for weeks. One of his volunteer assignments required that he learn

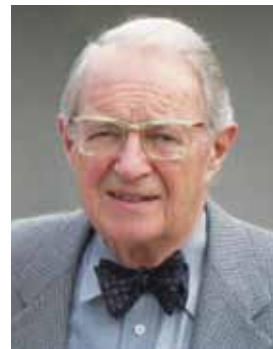
to ride a motorcycle as a means of transport. He fell in love with motorcycles, bought a couple, and ventured through the Pacific Northwest, sometimes with his wife, Joan, sometimes alone, and sometimes with his biking buddies. And of course he took a motorcycle repair course so that he could do his own repairs.

He idolized his family. He adored Joan, his wife of 47 years, who was his best friend and confidante. Joan and Alan were devoted parents to Drew (Ashley) and Katie (Chris). They are entitled to be very proud of both of them. He adored his two grandchildren, Jayden and Kennedy. He also will be greatly missed by his sister, Eileen Cook of Calgary.

Alan was an incredible human. The world is a better place as a result of his being. He will be missed. He was a life role model for all of us. Despite all his amazing talents, his mischievous smirk will be missed the most.

**—Grant Gibbings, MD  
White Rock**

### **Dr Alexander Leiper Robertson 1925–2018**



Dr Alexander Leiper Robertson was born in the family home at the corner of Rumble Street and Patterson Avenue in Burnaby on Robbie Burns's birthday. Alex completed his pre-med BA at UBC in 1949 and was promptly accepted into medical school at the University of Western Ontario in London. After second year he elected

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to take a sailing sabbatical to refine his maritime skills and to earn his fare in the family bakery. One year later, refocused, he returned to complete his medical degree in 1952.

In the course of his medical studies, his Plymouth Brethren connections introduced him to a dazzling debutante, Doris Nugent. Cupid did not waste any arrows! He and Doris fulfilled their matrimonial vows on 24 March 1956, and the magical union endured 62 years, until Alex's death. Initially, the newlyweds rented an apartment in Vancouver. After their first son, John, was born 1½ years later, they constructed their architecturally designed home on Braemar Avenue in Burnaby with a \$5000 mortgage; raised their three children, John, Rosemary and Mark; and lived there for the next 54 years.

After graduation, Alex returned to the West Coast to set up his family practice in Burnaby. There, he had privileges at Burnaby Hospital, where he also served as chief of staff. Early in his career he crossed paths with Dr Kurt Gottschling at the Salvation Army Outpatient Medical Clinic, where Alex was volunteering and Kurt was in the final weeks of his internship. On 1 July 1961 they formed a professional association that flourished until Alex retired in 1990 on his 65th birthday. Over almost 3 decades of association, Kurt had high praise for his colleague: "Like in any public office, people in charge sometimes meet with difficult problems. With wisdom and persuasion, Alex managed them all. He was smart, knowledgeable, and wise. He had empathy for the downtrodden. His sympathetic nature was well known and appreciated by his patients. He was moral, conscientious, and guided by his Christian faith."

It did not take long before Alex and Kurt had acquired more associates and were challenged for space. In 1972 Dr Cliff Silverthorne joined the group. His business expertise and po-

litical moxie were instrumental in locating a favorable site for expansion. Over the years the Royal Oak Medical Clinic was the office location for Drs Bond, Hiller, Wagar, Jones, Dublin, Hanam, and Foggin.

Alex was a man who embodied the word *gentleman*. As a physician, his gentle and healing ways and quiet words of comfort and compassion earned the loyalty and love of his patients. Alex always had a listening ear for his friends and family and made a point of seeking out those who were perhaps forgotten by others.

Alex was also a man of faith and great personal integrity. He was a faithful supporter of youth and university work through the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (specifically Pioneer Pacific Camp and SFU IVCF), as well as the Union Gospel Mission.

Alex had a passion for gardening, golf, sailing, traveling, and his family. This was witnessed by the neatness and beauty of his yard, sailing journeys on *Tradewind II*, golfing on Fridays with his Killarney Park buddies, and the annual May long-weekend family getaways.

Alex and Doris have left an amazing legacy in their five remarkable grandchildren, Emily, Camille, Fiona, Michael, and Cameron. Alex is deeply missed by his family, friends, and colleagues. It is only fitting that his lifelong partner in practice has the final word: "We loved Alex and we know that he loved Jesus as his Lord and Savior. He will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

—Rosemary Bell

—John and Mark Robertson

—Kurt Gottschling, MD

—Ruth Albrecht, MD

—John Albrecht, MD

## BC Medical Journal Writing Prizes



### J.H. MacDermot Writing Award

The *BCMJ* invites writing submissions from student authors, and each year awards a prize of \$1000 for the best medical student submission accepted for print and online publication. Students are encouraged to submit full-length scientific articles and essay pieces for consideration.

The J.H. MacDermot Writing Award, sponsored by Doctors of BC, honors John Henry MacDermot, who served as editor for 34 years (1932–1968), overseeing the publication's transition from the *Vancouver Medical Association Bulletin* to the *BCMJ* in 1959. Dr MacDermot also served as BCMA president in 1926.

### BCMJ Blog Writing Prize

To encourage med students to take their first foray into medical writing, the *BCMJ* awards an additional writing prize of \$250 twice per year for the best 200- to 400-word blog submission accepted for online publication.

For submission guidelines and contest deadlines, please visit [www.bcmj.org/submit-article-award](http://www.bcmj.org/submit-article-award).