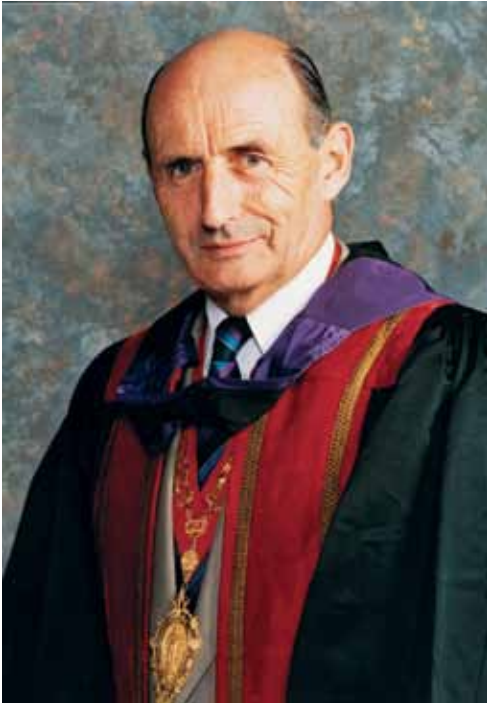


Obituaries

We welcome original tributes of less than 300 words; we may edit them for clarity and length. Obituaries may be emailed to journal@doctorsofbc.ca. Include birth and death dates, full name and name deceased was best known by, key hospital and professional affiliations, relevant biographical data, and a high resolution head-and-shoulders photo.



Dr John O'Brien-Bell
1929–2022

Dr John O'Brien-Bell's first exposure to medicine was as a young child making house calls with his family physician father, whose practice was based in a working-class area of Birmingham, England. John grew up during the turmoil of the Great Depression and was just 10 years old when World War II broke out. At a young age, he observed patients suffering from illnesses such as polio and tuberculosis and saw the serious impact of poverty on patients in need of care. His father died prematurely of tuberculosis, leaving his mother as a young widow. A positive result of such difficult childhood experiences led to his interest in medicine, which he chose as a career. He graduated

from London's prestigious Westminster Medical School in 1956.

After 10 years working under the British NHS, John immigrated to Canada in 1966. He grew to love his adopted province and country, and settled in Surrey, BC. After his arrival in Canada, he began working as an assistant physician in New Westminster. He later accepted an invitation to formally join and practise with Dr Geoff Parker-Sutton in 1967.

It is not surprising, considering world events at the time, that his earlier years in England led him to develop an interest in politics. After settling in BC, he served as an alderman in Surrey, was a campaign manager for an MP, and even ran for a seat in the BC provincial legislature. He later shifted those interests to the equally (some believe more) challenging field of medical politics.

In the 1970s, John was also the editor of a doctors' provincial newspaper, the *BCMA News*, and later the *Western Medical News*. He helped rekindle the then BC Medical Association when, as a key member of the so-called "reform group," it took on and challenged what it called "the establishment." Fortunately for our profession, the two groups eventually reconciled, and the result was that our profession became stronger and more united. John went on to serve as president of the then BCMA from 1986 to 1987, and president of the Canadian Medical Association from 1988 to 1989. His goals for his patients and the medical profession were emphasized during both terms and echoed those of Canada's 1964 Hall Commission: "the highest possible health-care, freedom of choice, and a free and self-governing profession."

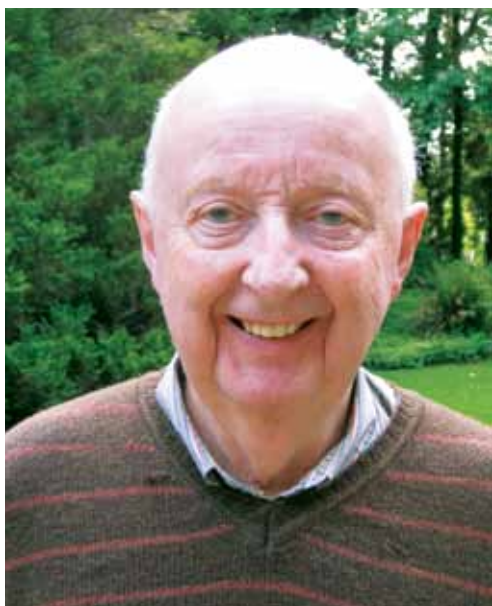
By the time John began his term as CMA president, his practice had grown to include Drs Tom Wong, Glenn Bowsby, and Janet Bowsby. Their support helped him balance his CMA duties with his practice. However, John continued to serve his own patients at every opportunity and continued to do 8-hour emergency shifts at Surrey Memorial on a weekly basis. When asked about his availability for interviews as president, he told reporters and journalists that he was busy with his patients once he left home. He gave out his home telephone number, telling them, "The best time to call is around 7 a.m., before I've left the house."

John was my friend. We corresponded and spoke often. We often went for lunch to chat about medicine, politics, and the world. He was a very active man, and an active runner into his 80s. He also continued to see patients (as a locum tenens) into his mid-80s. Like many others I am a better person for having known and learned from him. Leaders like him are a rarity in this modern era.

John leaves a daughter, Catharine, a college lecturer in photography, and five grandchildren. His son, Andrew, sadly died prematurely in 2017. His wife, Louie, also predeceased him. He retained devoted friends and family back in England, whom he continued to visit annually.

On 21 May 2022 there will be a celebration of John's life held at Victory Memorial Park in South Surrey. His family requests that those wishing to remember his legacy consider a donation to Surrey Hospitals Foundation.

—Brian Day, MB
Vancouver



Dr Peter Michael Rees

1942–2022

With great sadness, we share the news of Dr Peter Michael Rees’s recent death. Peter had accepted his devastating diagnosis with courage and was determined to continue to enjoy as much of life as he could. His loving family and friends, his love of music, his sense of humor, watching the Canucks (even when they weren’t winning), cricket, rugby (providing that Wales was playing), and his memories of family holidays to Hawaii and Ucluelet all led Peter to frequently say, “That was a nice day,” as he was helped to bed at night. Thankfully, we were able to look after Peter at home until his last few days.

After receiving his doctorate in physiology from Cardiff University, Peter completed his medical undergraduate training at Oxford. He chose to do his internship “somewhere nice” as he was planning to return to continue his academic career in Oxford. Peter chose Vancouver and was accepted at VGH. His experience of Canadian clinical medicine, which was so different from what he had seen at Oxford, caused Peter to make a complete change in career plans and become the caring, conscientious clinical neurologist who was so valued both in Burnaby and at the outreach clinics in Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, and Powell River.

Being in Vancouver allowed Peter to fulfill

his passions for river fishing and singing (in the Welsh Men’s Choir and the Bach Choir). He used his time away during curative chemotherapy for lymphoma in 2002 to write a highly respected and often-quoted meta-analysis on mild traumatic brain injury, which had become Peter’s focus of practice.

Peter is survived by his wife, Rosemary; his children, Rachel, Bryn (Monique), Joanne (Harvey), and Stephanie; seven grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. We miss him dearly.

—Rosemary Basson (Rees), MD
West Vancouver



Dr Barrie Humphrey

1940–2020

Dr Barrie Humphrey was best known locally as a stalwart of the Gabriola Historical and Museum Society (board member 1994–2004 and a frequent contributor to the *Shale*).

Barrie was characteristically modest about his distinguished medical career: Arthur Crease Award in his final year at UBC Medical School (1967), a coveted psychiatry residency at McGill, postgraduate training at Stanford University, a member of the teaching staff at McMaster University, and a psychiatrist for the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital community outreach unit. After moving to Gabriola in 1990, he brought his expertise to Nanaimo and joined the mobile

outreach to seniors team and practised with them until he retired in 2000.

His curiosity was boundless; from Gabriola’s history to the mechanics of his wheelchair, he was a man who loved to learn. He knew more about historical epidemics than most people want to know, had a passion for statistics, and would have reveled in the flood of data occasioned by the pandemic, undoubtedly producing much-needed useful analysis.

Barrie was an empathetic and compassionate listener, a helpful quality in a psychiatrist and a friend. His daughter, Stacey, probably summed him up best: “He was generous and kind, ethical, and he loved to talk about pretty much any topic.”

He is survived by Cathy Humphrey, his wife of 57 years; Jonathan, his beloved son; Stacey, his adoring daughter; and his brothers, Blair and John.

—Roy Innes, MD
Gabriola Island

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#LegalRights of #transgender #youth seeking medical care. BC law regarding consent to gender-affirming medical treatment is unambiguous: the youth has exclusive right—provided certain conditions are met by their health care provider.

Read the article: bcmj.org/articles/legal-rights-transgender-youth-seeking-medical-care

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