

Obituaries

We welcome original tributes of less than

700 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 Derek Leonard French 1931–2024

Dr Derek Leonard French, 92, of Victoria, passed away peacefully on 17 March 2024.

Derek was born on 9 April 1931, the eldest child of Leonard and Gladys French, in the London suburb of Bow, England. He grew up amid the turbulence of World War II, an experience that deeply shaped his life. In his youth, Derek excelled in sports such as soccer, boxing (he was London champion and second in England), and cricket, and he relished exploring the English countryside on his bicycle, sometimes cycling hundreds of kilometres.

Derek met Shirley Daventry, his life partner and spouse of nearly 70 years, while they were students at Barking Abbey School. They married in 1954 as he completed his medical studies, becoming a physician. As was required of young men in post-war England, Derek embarked on his national service, practising medicine in

Tripoli, Libya, and Egypt during the Suez Crisis. He did his internship in Manchester and later did additional training in anesthesia.

Derek and Shirley immigrated to Victoria in 1959, where Derek worked for decades as a family physician. He provided holistic care with a focus on preventive medicine and pain management. He spent many years on the board of the Victoria Cool Aid Society and working at the clinic. He was an early adopter of sedation for dental procedures and focused solely on this later in his career.

Outside of work, Derek raced a 6-metre sailboat with friends, and he learned to ski and garden. He was a founding member of the Iyengar Yoga Centre of Victoria. A quiet and contemplative person, Derek loved the wild, natural beauty of Vancouver Island, especially rural Metchosin, where he lived for more than 60 years. Derek was a quintessential lifelong learner. He was well read and had a quick, keen wit. He took great pleasure in a lively conversation over a good meal paired with wine.

His family will remember him as a talented storyteller and eclectic philosopher. His dry English humor and astute observations will be missed by his wife, Shirley; his children, Rachel (Carlos), Stephanie (Chris), and Adrian (Michele); his seven grandchildren, Adriana (Greg), Miguel (Abby), Andres, Pierre Sebastian (Francesca), Elise (Parker), Eligh, and Henry; and his great-grandchild, Mattea.

—French family



Dr Nasser Gholi Shojanian 1930–2024

I learned that every mortal will taste death. But only some will taste life.

—Rumi

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Dr Nasser Shojanian, who died peacefully at home at age 94. He is survived by his loving and devoted wife of 61 years, Mitra; his younger brother, Dr Majid Shojanian; his children, Kamran (Anna), Keyvan (Lindsay), and Nima (Maureen); and his grandchildren, Alexander, Christianne, Yasmin, and Jordan. His many surviving cousins, nieces, nephews, and other extended family span three continents.

Born in Iran to Mojtaba Shojanian, a descendant of the Qajar dynasty, and Naiereh Ashraf Khalvati, of the Aga Khan family, Nasser was the fifth of nine children. He attended medical school in Tehran before marrying Mitra and starting a family. Together they moved to Winnipeg in 1965 so that Nasser could complete his medical

residency, and they decided to stay in Canada. After 10 years in Winnipeg, being mentored by Dr Hogg in dermatopathology, Nasser attained the level of assistant professor at the University of Manitoba. The more temperate climate of Victoria beckoned, and the growing family eventually relocated to settle in the city that he loved most. He joined the pathology department at both Victoria General Hospital (VGH) and Royal Jubilee Hospital, where he practised as a dermatopathologist until he retired at 75.

Nasser worked as a pathologist for 40 years. His contributions to medicine include introducing a screening service in cytopathology and a fine needle aspiration service at VGH and teaching colleagues the technique. This is still in place today, although it is now based at Royal Jubilee Hospital. He also started the fledgling immunohistochemistry service at VGH. His administrative work included working as the vice-chief of pathology at St. Joseph's Hospital (which later became VGH).

Nasser was honored to give the annual Victoria Medical Society Listerian Oration in 2005 titled "An optimistic look at the cross sections of the world through the magical microscope—a Persian physician and a Canadian pathologist."

Although he was a physician with a scientific nature, he was also an artist, poet, and writer. His acrylic paintings and wood sculptures are featured prominently in the homes of his family members and friends. He translated books and poetry from Farsi to English and French, and he wrote an autobiography titled *A Persian Letter* to memorialize family histories. A true renaissance man, he was as comfortable with frozen sections and a microscope as he was quoting Hafiz and Rumi or dancing with Mitra.

Always active and happiest in nature, Nasser made the most of the moderate weather and spent time outdoors almost every day of his life. He could be spotted most days along the trails near Arbutus Cove or at Gyro Beach with his walking stick in hand. In his later career and postretirement

years, he spent more time at the Victoria Golf Club with Mitra and friends. They enjoyed a rich social life and hosted countless parties and fundraisers for a variety of causes over the decades before settling into quieter pursuits in recent years, like small dinner parties and playing duplicate bridge.

Nasser treasured his family above all. Perhaps his greatest early influence was his beloved mother, whom he revered. She survived World War II and the years after as a widow with nine children, all of whom benefited from her wisdom and her admonition to pursue knowledge and find their own paths. He imparted the same advice to his sons as they laid their own plans—two following him into medicine and one going into law. He was proud of their accomplishments and enjoyed the time he spent with them and their wives over the decades. His greatest joy was in watching the evolution of his grandchildren as they matured, and he was able to discuss philosophy and poetry with them as well.

While we grieve the loss of our extraordinary family patriarch, we celebrate the remarkable 94-year journey that brought him to his forever city and are grateful that he departed the way he lived: in comfort, with family, reading Hafiz one last time.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in his memory to Arthritis Research Canada (www.arthritisresearch.ca/donate).

Goodbyes are only for those who love with their eyes. Because for those who love with heart and soul there is no such thing as separation. —Rumi

—Anna Shojania, MBA
Vancouver

—Kam Shojania, MD, FRCPC
Vancouver

—Nima Shojania, MD, FRCPC
Kelowna



Travel insurance that's ready to go.

With MEDOC® you can enjoy an unlimited number of trips¹ during the policy year, including coverage for COVID-19 related medical costs during your trip for up to \$5 million.

Contact Johnson today.
1.855.473.8029
or visit Johnson.ca/MEDOC

JOHNSON 

Johnson Insurance is a tradename of Johnson Inc. ("JI"), a licensed insurance intermediary, and operates as Johnson Insurance Services in British Columbia and Johnson Inc. in Manitoba. MEDOC® is a Registered Trademark of JI. MEDOC® Travel Insurance is underwritten by Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Company of Canada ("RSA") and administered by JI. Valid provincial or territorial health plan coverage required. Travel Assistance provided by Global Excel Management Inc. JI and RSA share common ownership. ¹Maximum duration of 17 or 35 consecutive days applies to each trip outside of Canada, depending on your plan selection.