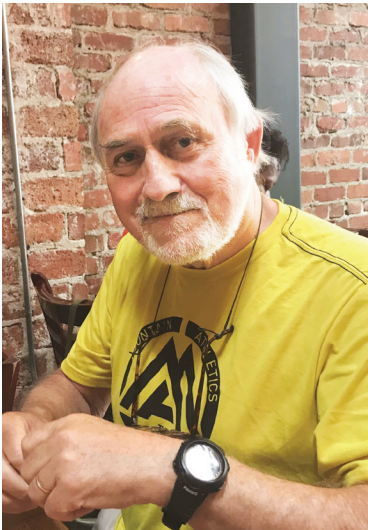


Obituaries

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 Joseph Walker

1946–2024

The wife, children, and grandchildren of Dr Joseph Walker (Nanose Bay, BC) are heartbroken to announce his death at home on 22 August 2024, after a heroic struggle with metastatic melanoma.

We are deeply grateful for the care Joseph received during his illness and would like to thank his doctors, the superb nurses and personal care workers at the Island Health (Oceanside Hospice Society) home support service, the hospice volunteers who offered him reiki, and many kind friends and neighbors.

Joseph was a widely respected physician known for his humanity, integrity, and great sense of humor. His vivid memory and gift for storytelling were legendary. Joseph was valued by his colleagues and patients wherever he worked.

He was born in St Neots, London, in 1946, to Irish parents (Thomas Walker of

Callan, County Kilkenny, and Mary Ellen Doherty of Donegal). When he was 9 years old, his family left London and returned to his father's farm in Callan. There, Joseph enjoyed a rich childhood, immersed in nature and imagination, and developed a gift for drawing. He earned a full scholarship to study fine art at Trinity College Dublin but instead chose to go to medical school at the University of London.

It was by no ordinary means that Joseph came to Canada in 1972, sailing with two friends across the North Atlantic in a 38-foot ketch, retracing Erik the Red's route through the Arctic. They landed in Labrador, where Joseph served as a doctor with the Grenfell Mission, traveling to remote communities by dogsled, helicopter, and ship, sometimes in fierce weather conditions. In 1976, Joseph took on a practice in Cape Breton, where he did everything from delivering babies and resetting bones to assisting with surgeries and covering the ER. He met his future wife one evening at a gathering of Irish music enthusiasts. Newcomers to Canada, Joseph and Ann spent formative years in Glace Bay and then Sydney, enjoying rich friendships and raising three children (plus many cats and collies and one chestnut quarter horse).

Joseph was a family physician in Cape Breton for 20 years before deciding to specialize in psychiatry at Dalhousie University in 1992. After completing his fellowship, he worked in Halifax for 5 years at the Willow Hall Unit at Nova Scotia Hospital and on the faculty at Dalhousie Medical School, where he took joy in helping to train psychiatry residents.

In 2002, he and Ann moved to Nanose Bay, BC. A passionate advocate for

the elderly, Joseph first worked in community geriatric psychiatry, visiting patients across Vancouver Island, then focused on consulting at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, where he drew on his medical training to diagnose and manage complex geriatric cases.

Joseph had an adventurous spirit that found many outlets over the years, from cross-country and downhill skiing to ocean sailing, kayaking, and hiking. He completed the historic Chilkoot Trail in Alaska and the challenging Camino Primitivo in northern Spain, and he climbed many mountain peaks on the West Coast.

When he retired in 2015, Joseph focused his attention on long walks with Ann, playing his classical guitar, painting watercolors, cooking great meals, and spending time with his family and grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife, Ann Graham Walker; his daughters, Kate and Alison; his son, Rowan Tomás; and his four grandchildren, Wyatt, Zoe, Marlow, and Jules.

The family suggests that anyone who wishes to donate in his memory direct their gift to the Nanaimo Community Hospice or the Oceanside Hospice Society in Qualicum Bay.

A memorial service will be held at St. Mary's Anglican Church in Nanose Bay (www.stmarynbc.ca) at 1:00 p.m. on 19 October 2024. Come, bring your stories, and/or please share them in the online comments section for this obituary.

—Roger Walmsley, MD
Nanaimo