

Obituaries

We welcome original tributes of less than 700 words; we may edit them for clarity and length. Email obituaries 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 Terrence (Terry) F. Rutherford
1929–2026

Dr Terrence (Terry) F. Rutherford died on 30 January 2026, after a short illness related to complications following treatment for Hodgkin disease.

Terry was born in Birch Hills, Saskatchewan, on 25 November 1929. He attended medical school at the University of British Columbia, graduating in 1956. Following a rotating internship at the former St. Joseph's Hospital in Victoria, he spent 5 years as a medical officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force, including 1 year of training in general surgery at the Lancaster Department of Veterans Affairs Hospital in New Brunswick. He completed further specialty training in pathology at the Department of Pathology at the Winnipeg General Hospital in 1967.

Terry joined the medical staff at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver in 1968, assuming responsibility as the associate head of the Department of Pathology and assisting in

establishing a modern clinical laboratory in the hospital's newly built Providence wing, which opened in April 1983.

Terry transitioned into the primary leadership role as chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine in 1983, a role he held until 1993. During this decade, Terry guided the laboratory through many challenges. The list is long, but highlights include modernizing the laboratory management structure, providing clinical and research support in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, facilitating the relocation of the UBC Diagnostic and Reference Laboratory to St. Paul's Hospital, and protecting the laboratory budget from fiscal restraints in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Throughout his tenure as chair, Terry continued in his clinical role as a diagnostic surgical pathologist and educator until he retired in 1995.

Terry devoted a great deal of time and energy to St. Paul's Hospital. He enjoyed working with others—technologists, students, pathologists, and clinical colleagues—and often helped his junior colleagues by lightening their clinical load. He was a generous person who freely gave his time. Terry was an active medical leader. Over the years, he served as chair of the hospital's Medical Advisory Committee, as president of its Medical Staff Association, and, in a provincial role, as president of the BC Association of Laboratory Physicians.

As a skillful administrator, Terry's abilities were often tested by the sometimes-fractious egos both within and outside the laboratory. He was particularly adept at making meetings as succinct and painless as possible through judicious use of the question "Does anyone have anything to

say that hasn't already been said?" During the summer, Terry wisely avoided holding Friday afternoon meetings and, whenever possible, finished all necessary work early enough to drive to his family cabin on Shuswap Lake, always a sanctuary from hospital-related stress.

After retirement, Terry regularly kept in touch with many hospital colleagues and often attended laboratory social events. He was a supportive, warm, and humorous person who was fun to be around. Terry will be missed by his wife, Anna, and his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and many friends.

—Douglas Filipenko, MD
Vancouver



Dr Gordon E. Dower
1923–2022

Dr Gordon E. Dower passed away on 9 December 2022. He was born on 16 November 1923 in Cardiff, Wales, to Dr Alexander Dower and Phyllis Dower (nee Ewbank). Gordon was accepted by St. Bartholomew's Hospital to study medicine. The

teaching labs were destroyed by a bomb in World War II, so his class was transferred to Cambridge, where he met his future wife, Helen Lucas-Smith.

Gordon finished his hospital training and several house jobs at Bart's before enlisting in the Royal Canadian Air Force as a medical officer, with postings in Chatham and Ottawa. On completion of his service, Gordon, Helen, and their infant daughter drove across Canada to Vancouver seeking a warmer climate. He visited the fledgling medical school at the University of British Columbia and was offered a job in the Faculty of Medicine, where he stayed until his retirement.

Gordon preferred research to medical practice and was particularly intrigued by the electrical activity of the heart. He developed a xenobiotic long-term culture of myocardial cells to study drug effects in vitro. He was part of Dr Murray Newman's investigation team studying the orca in captivity, and in 1964, he took the first ECG on an orca, Moby Doll, using plumbers' aids as suction cups for the leads. Gordon also developed the field of polarcardiography, in which the electrical activity of the heart is displayed as a vector over time. He also invented the EASI lead system, which uses a small number of leads to derive a 12-lead ECG using a computer. The device was used on the space shuttle *Challenger* missions to monitor astronauts' heart activity and is used for telemetry in hospitals. He was also a fellow of the American College of Cardiology and published over 50 scientific articles.

In retirement, Gordon continued to invent, and he built the Ridek electric car. At the time, battery charging was slow, and the premise was to swap out the battery deck while retaining the ride-on component. He attended many electric vehicle conventions, including one in Long Beach to celebrate his 80th birthday with his family.

Gordon went on his first flight at 5 years old, using his allowance at a local exhibition. He waited 40 years to qualify as a fixed-wing pilot and took to flying a helicopter upon retirement. When he was refused a car rental in Ireland at the age

of 81 while attending an electric vehicle convention, he instead rented a helicopter to explore the Emerald Isle.

At age 90, he received a new aortic valve via transcatheter implantation and had almost another decade of happy life. He moved to the Tapestry retirement community at Wesbrook Village at age 93 and made many friends. He presented talks on a variety of topics to the group, including "Why Einstein was wrong." Gordon was an avid runner and continued jogging until an injury at age 98. In his final illness, he opted for medical assistance in dying and was with family when he left us.

Gordon is survived by his daughters, Julia (Karl), Nancy (Jim), and Lin; grandchildren, Wendy, Sheila, Kate, Jill, and David; and great-grandchildren, Ry, Erika, Thor, Linnaea, Jimmy, Miles, Teagan, and Teddy. He was predeceased by his wife, Helen, and son, Roger.

Gordon was an eternal optimist with a brilliant mind, a love of family, and an interest in learning.

—Nancy Dower, MD, PhD, FRCPC



Dr Joseph (Joe) Frank Schweigel
1936–2025

Dr Joseph (Joe) Frank Schweigel, a pioneer in spinal cord rehabilitation and a beloved mentor to generations of surgeons, passed away on 9 November 2025.

Joe was born to immigrant parents in Regina, Saskatchewan. Soon after, the family moved to Vancouver, where Joe grew up with his sister, Frances Watson. He graduated from Vancouver College high school and attended the University of British Columbia. His path to medicine was a testament to his resilience: he transitioned from engineering to medical studies and survived a grueling battle with meningitis before graduating in 1962. After an internship in Toronto, he practised as a family physician in Ontario, where he met his wife, Bonnie (also a Vancouverite), on a blind date.

Following his residency at UBC, Joe completed a fellowship at the Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center in California. He returned to Vancouver to specialize in spine surgery, a move that would define his life's work.

Joe's professional legacy is anchored in the founding of the acute spinal cord injury unit, first at Shaughnessy Hospital and then at Vancouver General Hospital, alongside his friend, neurosurgeon Dr Skip Peerless. It was one of only three such specialized units in North America and remains a global model of care. In 1975, Joe became the unit's first director, tirelessly working one-in-two on-call shifts for years. His commitment to the community extended beyond the operating room; alongside his friend Doug Mowat, he served on the board of directors of the BC Paraplegic Association (now Spinal Cord Injury BC) and chaired the Rick Hansen Man in Motion Legacy Fund, raising vital awareness and funding for spinal cord injury care. He also served as chair of the UBC Medical Engineering Resource Unit.

To his students, Joe was a legend. Twice voted best medical student teacher, he was known for a rigorous style that birthed the term *Schweigelized*—a badge of honor worn by residents who met his exacting standards and emerged as better surgeons for it. He organized the orthopaedic seminar program, the basic science lecture program, and the surgical anatomy exposure sessions.

Although he retired from surgery in 2001, Joe continued a nonsurgical practice

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until age 72. In retirement, he relished traveling with Bonnie and hosting his four children—Robert (Dione), Jason (Julie), Carolyn (Malcolm), and Lorraine (Calum)—and his 12 grandchildren for their 50th and 55th wedding anniversaries in Kauai. He was a man of immense drive—famous for his 7 a.m. starts to family vacations—with a sharp mind, who spent his final years discussing politics and science with his “club” friends.

He leaves behind a legacy of excellence, a third generation of *Schweigel* UBC graduates, and a family who loved him dearly.

—Robert Schweigel, MD, FRCSC
Surrey



Dr Charles Peter Stockdill
1941–2026

We are saddened to announce the passing of Dr Charles Peter Stockdill on 27 January 2026, 1 day before his 85th birthday. He was predeceased by his wife, Deanna, by 8 days.

Peter was born in Victoria to Joyce and Dexter Stockdill, both architects. He attended St. Christopher’s Elementary School, followed by Glenlyon Preparatory School and Oak Bay High School. He started his postsecondary education at Victoria College, finishing with a BSc in chemistry and mathematics. Influenced by the lengthy illness and subsequent loss of his mother, he chose a career in medicine, obtaining his medical degree from the University of

British Columbia in 1966. After graduation, he completed a rotating internship at Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria.

Peter began his professional career in Prince Rupert, where he worked as a general practitioner with general anesthesia privileges at the local hospital, in partnership with Dr Bill Hick. While practising in Prince Rupert, he was the representative for District 9, Skeena, to the Board of Directors of the then-BCMA. After working for 5 years in this capacity, Peter returned to Vancouver with his young family—his wife, Shirley; son, Stephen; and daughter, Susanne—to join the residency program in ophthalmology at UBC.

Upon obtaining his FRCSC in ophthalmology, Peter set up his specialty practice in Langley. He worked there for the next 25 years. In this setting, he once again became active with the BCMA, and he was the first president of the Society of Specialists.

While in Langley, he became a charter member of the Rotary Club of Langley and was designated a Paul Harris Fellow. It was there, too, that the marriage to his first wife unfortunately ended. But Peter bravely moved on.

Peter later married Deanna Newnham (Espinola, Ontario), who worked in the ophthalmology supply business. They were a grand couple. With the assistance of Deanna’s nursing skills (she was a Hamilton General Hospital nursing graduate), Peter volunteered his surgical skills in Tonga, Ecuador, and India. When not in the operating room, Peter was either sailing with Deanna aboard the *Penta Star* or *Gypsy Wind* along BC’s West Coast or seeking refuge at their second home on Maui. Peter was devoted to Deanna throughout their lives together, as well as to his children.

Peter spent the final years of his working life on Vancouver Island in Qualicum, Parksville, and Port Alberni. Upon retiring, he continued his love of the ocean, with Deanna, by sailing up and down the coast. As a consequence—he always stood by his convictions—he became a member-at-large with the Council of BC Yacht Clubs, where he focused his attention on maintaining

access to waterways, anchorages, and shore rights for all British Columbians.

After Deanna became incapacitated with dementia, Peter became active with the Parksville Probus Club. He made many new friends in the organization, including Lajla Stevenson, who was with Peter when he passed. Peter loved personal contacts in life, but he was also a man of principle and not one to suffer fools. In this context, I am reminded of and paraphrase what former senator Ted Kennedy said of his brother, Robert: “Some men see things as they are and ask why; my brother saw things as they might be and asked why not.”

Peter will be missed by all who were close to him—his family, friends, and colleagues. He is survived by his children, Stephen Stockdill and Susanne Stockdill; grandchildren, Liam, Natasha, Michael, and Samantha; brothers, Thomas Stockdill (Patricia) and Dr James Stockdill (Debra); and stepchildren, Jeff Newnham, Mark Newnham, and Tracy Powell.

—James Stockdill, MD
Victoria

Health Professions and Occupations Act: What physicians need to know

The HPOA came into effect April 1, 2026, introducing changes to the regulation of health professionals in BC.

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