

In Loving Memory

Dr. William (Bill) J.D. Arnold

July 10, 1929–July 20, 2017

With his family by his side, Bill passed away peacefully on July 20 at the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital Palliative Care Unit. He was predeceased by his first wife, Florence, and son Michael. He is survived by his wife, Myrtle; his daughter, Sharon (D.B.) Quirke; his sons, David (Patti) Arnold and Stephen (Patti) Arnold; extended family, Marianne (Marty) Wick, Kris (Jen) Ostrom, (Tanya) Ostrom, 12 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren; and cousins, Judy (Harley) Boles, Lillian (Brian) Ellis and Sue Grislis.

Bill was born in Winnipeg and moved to Vancouver as a young boy. He was valedictorian of the Prince of Wales Class of 1947 and completed undergraduate studies at UBC where he distinguished himself on the football field. In 1955, Bill graduated from the second UBC Medical Class and completed an internship in London, Ontario. He married his high school sweetheart, Florence Thompson, in 1953 and together they raised 4 beloved children.

Dr. Bill, as he was affectionately known, was a family physician in Prince Rupert from 1957–1965 and a paediatric resident at Columbia University in New York from 1965–1968. He returned to Vancouver to practice at the Whitelaw and Maclean Paediatric Clinic and became the first visiting paediatrician to Prince Rupert. His special interest in children with spinal cord defects led him to establish the Spina Bifida Clinic at BC Children's Hospital in 1969, where he introduced a multidisciplinary approach to working with patients and their families—a novel approach at the time. Bill fostered a positive and inclusive work environment, leading the team in its dedicated service to patient care. His patients and their families were at the centre of his practice; as a colleague once said, "He always cared more for the child than the disease."

Head of the UBC Division of General Paediatrics for 10 years, Bill was also president of the Vancouver Medical Society, president of the BCCH Medical Staff, a clinical professor and tireless teacher. He inspired several family members to become physicians and many others to pursue excellence in their careers.

After retiring from full-time practice in 1993, Bill and Florence moved to Qualicum Beach, where he practiced part-time in local clinics and commuted weekly to continue his work at the BCCH Spina Bifida Clinic. He volunteered with the University of Alberta's OSVITA Medical Project, travelling twice to Kiev, Ukraine, as a medical consultant and educator. While he was on one of these trips, Florence died of a heart condition.

As a director and member of both the Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of BC and the SB&HA of Canada, and a member of the European Society for Research in H&SB, Bill participated in conferences in North America and Europe. These led to many holiday adventures with Myrtle, who he married in 1996. For 10 years, annual medical missions with the Poco a Poco Service Society took Bill and Myrtle to Guatemala to support SB patients and train medical personnel.

Bill was a member of St. Stephen's United Church and the Qualicum Beach Probus and Rotary Clubs. For most of his life, he loved and played tennis and golf and was an active member of the Vancouver Lawn Tennis and Badminton Club. Bill was also an avid football, baseball and rugby fan and a keen gardener. In retirement, his favourite pastime was enjoying the roses and the birds in his garden.

Bill will be remembered as a passionate, energetic, honest, thoughtful and gentle man who made a difference in the lives of many children and their families. We are tremendously proud of him and feel fortunate to have had this great and lovely man at the helm of our lives. He will be dearly missed.