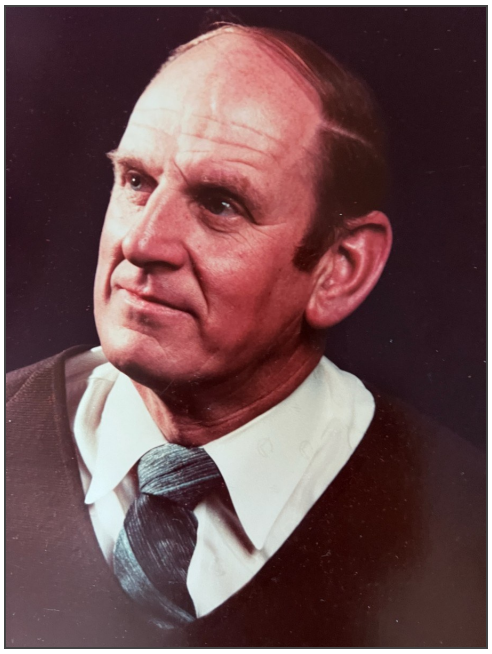
Donald McRae Grant



NOVEMBER 19, 2024

With his loving daughters by his side, Donald McRae Grant passed away on November 19, 2024, at the Salvation Army Rotary Hospice in Richmond, B.C. He was 92 years old.

Dad and his twin sister, Margaret, were born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, April 4, 1932, to Archibald Leslie and Jean (Ross) Grant. They joined older brother Ross. Their brother Gordon died as an infant. The family then moved to Sullivan Station (Surrey, B.C.) in 1934. Our dad remained in the same home that he was raised in for seventy years.

Dad married our mother, Jannette Byker on August 16, 1958, in Cloverdale, B.C. Lynn was born in 1960, followed by Leona in 1963.

Mom and Dad were very invested in the Sullivan Community. Dad was involved with Sullivan Firehall No.9 and helped form the B.C. Volunteer Firefighters' Association, serving as President on several occasions. He was a volunteer firefighter for 50 years. Both Mom and Dad were active members of the Sullivan Community Association (Sullivan Days, Thursday Girls' Sports Night, dances, renting/maintaining the Community Hall). Dad was an Elder at Bethany United Church and was also actively involved in our school, Sullivan Elementary. Dad was instrumental in the creation of Sullivan Park (he and others wanted a girls'-only field for his daughters to play their league softball games) and Dad coached Leona in both softball and hockey. We lived on 66th Avenue, where Dad

and Mom were avid gardeners and enjoyed raising Highland Cattle, plus assorted pets on their five acre farm. Mom passed away January 2, 1999.

Dad married Jean McAllister in December 2001 and relocated to Merritt, B.C. They spent many wonderful years together there being active boosters of the Merritt Centennials Hockey Team. Dad and Jean enjoyed their community work alongside their wonderful friends, Betty and Harry Doberstein. They made many hockey road trips and journeys to Mexico and Arizona together. Dad also enjoyed the friendship of his 7 a.m. coffee gang. Thanks Earl, Mike and Gerry for your friendship and for looking out for each other. The Merritt community held a very special place in our Dad's heart. Jean passed away in May 2019.

Dad remained in Merritt until August 2021 when he moved back to the Coast to be near Lynn and her family in Steveston, B.C. He was a well-loved resident of the Maple Residences at the time of his passing. He thoroughly enjoyed his view over Steveston Park, trips to the Flying Beaver for fish and chips, watching planes fly at the airport and weekly Sunday dinners at Lynn's house.

Dad was a machinist by trade. He began his career at the Sumner Ironworks and finished his career at BCIT as a Machine Shop Instructor. During this time he witnessed Vancouver Vocational Institute change to Pacific Vocational Institute and then to BCIT. He worked in Building 13. Dad often expressed that his working years there were some of the very best years of his life. Lynn and Leona have fond memories of milkshakes, family Christmas parties and having their 1960's era Valiants repaired by the Auto Mechanic students. (Dad insisted we had to have a car with a Slant 6 engine). He retired from BCIT after 30 plus years.

His favourite place on Earth, in addition to Sullivan, was Saturna Island. Dad discovered this magical place at the age of 15, after building his own 13ft 3 inch boat, using the plans in a Popular Mechanics magazine. Dad would often venture across the Strait to Tumbo Island to catch fish for his mom. During these trips to

Tumbo, he discovered Saturna and would camp in Boot Cove or Winter Cove. In 1966, Dad and Mom bought property overlooking Lyall Harbour. Dad and his good friend Ray Curtis, along with their students at Pacific Vocational Institute, built a prefabricated cabin, dismantled it, and trucked it to Saturna. Our family has continued to enjoy this piece of paradise ever since. Dad often contributed time and energy to this beloved community as well, most notably providing Saturna with their first pumper fire truck. Surrey Fire Department donated this older vehicle and Dad's merry men at PVI updated the engine and paint. He hosted annual Bethany United picnics over to the island and the logistics of these outings, inspired Lynn and Hugh to have their wedding on Saturna. Every year we enjoy the excitement and good food at the July 1st Lamb Barbeque. As recently as last month, Dad enjoyed coffee with his friends on the porch of the Saturna General Store. Whenever Dad met a newcomer on the island, he would always ask them how they discovered Saturna, his favourite place.

Dad was a good athlete in his younger years. Basketball and Flag Football were his passions amongst other sports, while attending Tweedsmuir Secondary School. Later, he played Sr. B Men's Basketball for B and B Trucking in Cloverdale, playing the Harlem Globetrotters several times, as they toured local communities. Dad was also an avid outdoorsman, enjoying duck hunting, but fishing was his passion. He enjoyed saltwater fishing at Saturna Island and River's Inlet and later, in the fresh waters of Stump and Nimpo Lakes. Dad's largest catch was a 69.5 lb whopper of a Spring Salmon, caught in Hakai Pass (true story!!).

Dad was predeceased by his parents, his brothers Ross and Gordon, his twin sister, Marg, his sister-in-laws Margaret and Lena, his brother-in-laws Ellsworth and Bud and his nephew, John. He is survived by Lynn, Hugh, Eric, Logan, Bria (Landon, Ethan, Kaeden), Kyle (Andrea and Emily) and by Leona, Peter, Daniel, Catherine and Madeline. Dad is also fondly remembered by his nephews Corey (Judy, Ashley, Cody) and Gordon Grant, his late nephew's daughter, Heather Grant, niece Deanna

Koziy and nephews Steven and Jim Parry. Jean's sons Jack and Allen had great admiration for Dad. Elvis, our dog, misses Grandpa very much!

"Tight Lines and Straight Shooting" Dad! You will be greatly missed! We had the BEST GIRL DAD in the world!!

Dad has been cremated and his ashes will be sprinkled in Boat Pass, Saturna Island, so that he can travel the world. A celebration of his life well-lived will be held when the salmon return in early Spring.

Donations may be made to the Salvation Army Rotary Hospice House, 6460 No. 4 Road, Richmond, B.C. V6Y 2S9. The staff took exceptional care of our father during his short stay.

Messages of Condolence

Great to hear the details of a life well lived. Our sincere condolences on his passing.

— Dave Andru

Dearest Leona, my heartfelt condolences to you and your family. I know how deeply you loved your dad and how much you enjoyed just being around him. It sounds like he lived an incredible life and that you and your family were a cherished part of it.

— Lorie Gale-Gervais

Leonna, Lynn and families, I wanted to share my condolences to all of you during this difficult time. Leonna, you always spoke about your dad so lovingly and having this beautiful insight into his life gave me more of an appreciation of the wonderful man and parent, he was. He was also very fortunate to have two incredible daughters supporting him. Sending you lots of love.

— Jacquie Friesen

Such a lovely tribute to an amazing man. I had Wonderful times staying with Don at their home in Merritt, he was always upbeat and very wise. I was proud to know him and to work with him on so many projects. Rest in peace Don. We'll miss your humour.

— David Howe

I just learned of Don today. I've been looking after Sullivan Park for 33 years now and only had stories to go by from passers by. How nice to meet you today Leona and what a remarkable man Don was to build his baby girl a ballpark. All I did was maintain it and the washrooms for my baby girl. Anyone - come by Sullivan Park (64 and 152 Surrey) and if you see an old guy on a golf cart - going round and round - that's me!

— Norm Marples

Leona and Lynn - I’m keeping you in my thoughts. Just found out about his passing - and from a friend in the Surrey Fire Dept. Don was a treasure and I always looked up to your dad. You could count on him for advice -stories - and laughter. I have shared stories and heard stories about your dad through many mutual friends. He did indeed touch many and left a legacy. I last saw him at a gathering in the Sullivan Hall years ago where I had just mentioned his name in a speech - looked up - and there he was. Needless to say I got a handshake and hug. Don’s teaching have blessed me to grow into one of the good old boys. I will never forget him - or you my dear home room friend Leona - and remember your smile Lynn in those early days on the 1041 bus.

— Mike Griffith

My sincere condolences. Don was a community builder and a great friend of my grandfather, A W Gillis.

— Casey MacNamara