Russell Hamer Ritchie

JANUARY 16, 2026

Dr Russell Hamer Ritchie, FRCS England, Edinburgh and Canada. 19 May 1941 - 16 January 2026. Born Ruabon, Wales. Trained as a general and vascular surgeon at St Bartholomew’s Hospital, London. Married Ruth Ritchie (née Burn) in 1965.

Russell practiced medicine in England until his immigration to Canada in 1973 with Ruth and daughters Rachael and Victoria, soon joined by the arrival of son Russell T. Residing first in Penticton, then in Naramata, Russell and family embraced all of life in Canada. Russell was a passionate life-long learner who took pride in standing at the leading edge of surgical knowledge to do his very best for his patients. Always quick with a joke or a story, he enjoyed a wide circle of friends amongst his medical colleagues and beyond. At home Russell supported his children doing their very best in all things, and especially education, as he valued education and the pur-suit of excellence as pathways to the best life. Russell was no less a seeker of adventure and fun. Russell and Ruth joined in the agricultural life of the Okanagan as they developed a small or-chard, then vineyard in Naramata. The family explored BC and the Pacific Northwest by road, often in conjunction with swim meets at which Russell kept meticulous records of each child’s performance, and sometimes swam a leg when the team was missing a member.

Memorable family holidays included visits to the US and Mexico, the last requiring in Russell’s view a mastery of Spanish acquired by lessons taken prior to the trip. Russell also kept up connection to his brother and friends in the UK. In the Okanagan Russell took up many opportunities to join his friends in outdoor activities. He rode horses into the Okanagan backcountry, hunted, fly-fished, and

golfed.

In 2003 Russell moved into semi-retirement in Vancouver via working visits to New Zealand, and volunteer teaching of anatomy to medical students at UBC. In retirement Russell and Ruth travelled extensively, across Canada, to China, India, and throughout Europe. Russell brought a surgeon's eye to all of his retirement pursuits, whether preparing for sights to be seen on a trip, building model ships, or solving cryptic crosswords. Russell welcomed the arrival of his three grandchildren with his typical great enthusiasm for his family's interests. He took pride in knowing what each grandchild was learning and doing, and in supporting each grandchild's passions. He was a constant source of rides and encouragement, at rowing regattas, rugby and football matches, water polo games, and at concerts and model club. Russell knew how fortunate he and Ruth were to see their children and grandchildren grow to thriving adulthood, saying often that he could never have imagined as a child the life he would lead. He was content as he left the world, surrounded by his family, who will celebrate and remember him.

Private family service to be held at a later date. Donations in Russell's memory may be made to Médecins Sans Frontières www.msf.org

Messages of Condolence

My condolences to Gwen, Rachael and the entire family. Sending lots of love during this difficult time.

— Sarah Thomas

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