Charles Alvin Towriss

FEBRUARY 21, 2023

TOWRISS, Charles Alvin. September 7, 1932 - February 21, 2023. Alvin was a self-taught master of many skills and one of the most intellectually curious people you could ever meet. In his lifetime, he was a projectionist, a businessman, a cable television technician, a house builder, a decent billiards player, a golfer, a Rotarian, a Mason, Barb's right-hand man, a gardener, an always self-critical chef, the best kind of friend to so many, a first-rate problem solver, a scotch aficionado, an ice cream and pasta devotee and all round foodie, women's basketball supporter, family man, a superior Gramps, and the absolute king of pithy one liners. His grandkids could be forgiven for having wondered if he might also be a limo driver when he and Barb would pick them up and bring them to Hope for summer holidays in his fancy emerald green Lincoln Continental. He was well known for his perfunctory (and humorous) letters to the editor of the Vancouver Province newspaper. Al was also the family's go-to "Google" before Googling was invented. Alvin passed away peacefully (but we're pretty sure he was also somewhat annoyed, as he was not a fan of hospitals at all) in Hope, BC. He is survived by his daughters Cory and Allison, son in law Mike, grandchildren, Shauna (Keith), Destin (Ryan), Clay (Davina) and cherished great-granddaughter Marlowe.

Alvin spent his childhood years in various mining towns in BC, including the small town of Ymir (population 245). He returned to Ymir years later to boldly buy a "round for the house" at the local Ymir Hotel – which, due to the lack of bar patrons, cost him less than $1.00. This tickled his frugal funny bone to no end.

When Al was young, the Towriss family moved to Princeton when his father Mel inherited the Capitol Theatre from his own father. Al curled, played hockey and baseball growing up, rode his bike everywhere, loved to fish and swam in the Tulameen and Similkameen rivers all summer long. He worked in the theatre until age 18, when he moved to Vancouver to attend UBC. Family matters called him back to Princeton a year later, where Al became the full-time film projectionist at the theatre. It was there that Al met the love of his life, Barbara Purich, and they were married in 1956. Barb and Alvin were not only partners in love, but partners in business. While Barb was the public face of the Capitol Theatre, Al was the behind-the-scenes fixer and film projector expert. Ever the hard worker (a trait that he passed down to his daughters and grandchildren), Al concurrently worked days at Ewart's Hardware to support his young family and then seven nights a week at the theatre. Alvin and Barb made many lifelong friends in Princeton and always talked fondly of the many dinner parties they enjoyed.

In 1972, Al decided that the beautiful mountains of Hope BC should be no detriment to delivering cable television to the area (they kind of were a detriment, but he was a persistent guy), and he and Barb subsequently moved to Hope and brought cable TV to the town and surrounding area when they opened the Hope Cable Television office. Over the years, Al made numerous helicopter trips to the Hope mountaintops to adjust his satellite dishes, which always seemed to fail at the most inopportune times (such as when Hope residents wanted to watch the Super Bowl). Al and Barb met a whole new group of lifelong friends - who became like extended family to their daughters and grandkids - and enjoyed a warm and active social life in Hope. They sold their cable business in 1990 and began to fill their retirement years with many travels to various parts of Europe, China and many warmer destinations.

Soon after settling into retirement, Alvin and Barb took up golf and it quickly became an integral part of their lives. They became members of the Hope Golf

Club, participated in the club tournaments and were regular participants in the ‘9 and Dines’ at the club. Alvin developed a passion for the game, he practiced often, enjoyed making clubs, as well as gripping and re-gripping clubs. Aside from their international trips, they also travelled throughout BC, the Pacific Northwest and California with their clubs in tow. Alvin became so proficient at the game that he won the Princeton Senior Open tournament – no small feat for a person who didn’t take up the game until late in life.

Barb predeceased Al far too early in 2005, but he capably carried on all Christmas traditions (if you knew Barb, she left big shoes to fill in the Christmas department…) and he never stopped reminiscing about their life together, keeping her memory vibrant by sharing the best of their stories with his family. He said many, many times to all of us, “She was so beautiful”. And she was, both inside and out.

Al also leaves behind his Whisky Wednesday crew (who cheekily brought WW to his hospital room!), his McDonald’s coffee crew, all his golf buddies, his numerous dinner pals (at 90 years old, he had a far more active social life than the rest of his family combined!), and the many dear friends he and Barb made together. Our Dad requested that there be no funeral service (he said he hated to be the centre of attention) so if you want to remember him, pour a glass of whisky, think of your best Alvin story, and raise a toast to our beloved Dad and Gramps. He truly was our irreplaceable North Star.

Vancouver Province, March 16, 2017

“Not a classy term”

From the recent federal to the looming provincial elections, we are bombarded by politicians referring to the “middle class.” I am not sure exactly what middle class means. Maybe it means there are lower-class and upper-class Canadians.

Great Britain has struggled for years to get rid of the class society because it creates division among its citizens. “Middle class” seems to be a term not compatible with Canadian values. I suggest politicians use “middle income” as a better term.

Alvin Towriss, Hope

Messages of Condolence

We share in your love and loss of your wonderful parents. Alvin was all that your obit describes him. We shared so many wonderful hours with him. Lv Jerry and Carol

— Jerry/Carol Reid

Al was an incredible person to be around. He was funny, intelligent, talented and always acted with integrity. He set a great example for all of us to follow. Alvin and Barb were significant in the community and in many of our lives. They will both be missed and remembered.

— Robert Hasell

Alvin was simply one of the most level-headed, sensible, rational men I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. That, combined with his wry sense of humour, made him a joy to have a conversation with. I will miss him - as I really miss Barb, who was so much fun to be with (I played bridge with her for many years, in the "good ol days"!)

— Ernestine Franson

Alvin was an absolute treasure. I loved hearing stories of the old days, like when he drove the Hope-Princeton Highway on opening day in November 1949. Alvin and Barb are remembered fondly by me and so many others. ♡

— Jessica McWilliams

Your words are beautiful and so true.
He, they, Barbara and Alvin, have been such meaningful, amazing friends for almost 50 years. Such friends provide easy comfort, relaxation, support, and so much fun! We shared so many terrific experiences, including with our families!
I am missing him!

— Keren Hasell

Alvin was a great guy. Had coffee with him and the crew. Alvin and his wit will be missed. Sorry for you loss.

— Gary Lewis

Alivin and Barb changed the town with both bring cable vision and the charm that came with them. The District of Hope will miss both of them. Alvin would always go around the block and drive by our house as it was easier to get in his driveway.

— Mayor Victor Smith

I can remember exactly when the Towriss family moved into our neighborhood, and boy did I hit the jackpot. Alison got a new little neighborhood kid basketball project she probably didn’t want (I personally take credit as her first player coached, you’re welcome Canada) and Barb And Alvin got a kid would would come and knock their door often. Why, because they were so patient and kind to a very talkative kid. I remember that fondly and always will. My Dad and Alvin were great golfing partners too for years, pretty much daily and I will always remember him telling me Alvin stories and his witty quips throughout my adult life. Golfing with the two of them on my trips back to Hope will also remain with me as cherished memories. Mr. Towriss (fairly sure I never actually did call him Alvin ever) will always be remembered by me with great respect and plenty of smiles. So sorry for your loss. Drew

— Drew Cope

I worked in the Pro shop at Hope Golf Club for the past 5 years. I always looked forward to Alvin’s games of golf and would do my best to sit down with Alvin and Larry Ortis for their after golf beer. The amount of wisdom and humor expressed was very special to me.

— Charlie Grant

So sorry I didn't find out sooner that Uncle Alvin passed! I loved talking with him although, that was very intermittent. It was also fantastic to see him pop up on Facebook. My condolences to my cousins, their families, and all of Uncle Alvin's friends!

— Barry Koenig

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https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/towriss-charles-alvin

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