James Maurice Wood

JUNE 5, 2022

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Early on the morning of June 5, Pentecost Sunday, the spirit of Jim Wood flew away to soar with the Great Spirit. He was 80. He had greatly longed for this day and so, although those of us he left behind miss him terribly, we are also very happy that he is at peace and at rest.

Jim was the son of Anne-Marie Rostaing of Calgary and William Douglas Wood of Golden, B.C. He was born on January 5,1942 at the Holy Cross hospital in Calgary, where his mother had trained as a nurse. He spent his early childhood in Calgary where he attended Sacred Heart school along with his older brother, Louis, and younger brother, Andy. His dad, who joined the armed forces and was a small arms specialist in the RCEME corps, spent WWII in eastern Canada. During this time, Jim, his mom and two brothers, lived with his maternal grandparents who had immigrated to Calgary from France 30 years previously. As a result, Jim grew up speaking French as well as English, which was unusual in Calgary in the 1940’s.

During this time in Calgary, the family would spend much of their summers at the Rostaing farm. This is Jim’s own account: “As young ones on the Rostaing Farm in Ohaton-Bawlf, Alberta, we spent our summer month on their farm. Eddy was

driving a Caterpillar Grader for the county smoothing out the gravel. He also took the time to do the same for neighbour farms as an unpaid favour. Eddy gave each of us a day with him on the “Cat- Grader”. The day it was my turn, we did a farmer’s road to his house. The farmer brought out a case of beer & handed a “Pilsner” to Eddy. Eddy said to the farmer:” what about one bottle for my helper, Maurice. It was a very hot August day and I drank it!! When we got back to the Rostaing Farm, mom said to Eddy: “What’s the matter with Maurice, he can’t walk straight!” Eddy said, well he worked hard, and I guess he’s just tired!!”

In Jim’s own words, when his Dad was transferred from Calgary in 1952; “…to the “Van Doos - 22ieme Regiment in Valcartier, Quebec, Mom and us 3 boys and Dodie, a toddler 8 years younger than me, were to travel by train to Quebec City. One morning, in the CN diner, Mom ordered grapefruit for all of us. She went on to explain how you dig it out. As Mom dipped her spoon into the grapefruit, the juice squirted directly into both of her eyes, stinging, and the porter came over when Mom shrieked. Mom didn’t say a word and let us eat the grapefruit without any incident.”

Jim’s tender heart revealed itself early on when, as the story goes, his sister Dorothy was born and Jim, instead of making funny remarks about size or appearance, greeted her with a kiss. As a teenager, he always had a summer job, and he would bring little gifts home for his sister. A special bond developed between them that exists still.

After five years in Quebec, the family was moved again, this time to Montreal, where Jim’s education continued in French. During this time, Jim’s love of sports, especially hockey and football blossomed. He played football with the East End Larks in Montreal. Following a particular game, he was mentioned in the

newspaper, an event that was a source of pride and regrets. Jim's full name is Maurice James and up until this time, Jim was known as Maurice, which was a name that he did not particularly like, but which, in a francophone environment, was ok. However, it was misspelled once again as Morris in the English newspaper, and so this was the end of Maurice. It was at this time that he decided, henceforth, to be known as Jim. Not only was he an excellent football player, but his hockey skills were also noticed by the Montreal Canadians. He was invited to summer try-out camp. However, half-way through the camp, his mother showed up and pulled him out. She did not approve of a potential career as a hockey player.

At 18, Jim decided to join the RCMP and was the youngest recruit in his troop. Training at Depot Division in Regina, which, in the early 60s, still included riding and taking care of horses, transformed Jim into a mature individual and brought out his inherent integrity and sense of justice. It was at training in Regina where many of Jim's lifelong friendships were forged. Jim's career in the RCMP took him to Quebec, Montreal and Ottawa. After retirement, these friends would travel to gather and get together, including making special surprise trips to see Jim. Jim remained a loyal friend to his troopmates throughout his life. These troop mates were an important and meaningful connection for Jim, staying in touch regularly to the end of his life.

Jim was blessed with 3 daughters. From his first marriage he welcomed his daughter Christina in 1967. Years later, he met Rosmarie while they were both working at the Montreal airport, and they were married on January 3rd, 1975. Soon after, they moved to Embrun just outside of Ottawa where they welcomed daughters Sandra in 1976 and Maureen in 1977. Jim was a great father. Whether it was building a sandbox, swing set or snow forts, you could find him with the girls and their sidekick, a black lab named Pepper, spending many hours

in the backyard playing and singing songs. During this time, he was approached by the Embrun Hockey Club to coach the "Embrun '72's" and he helped bring home the Eastern Ontario Junior C Championship Trophy during the 79-80 season.

In 1985 Jim retired from the RCMP and went on to start a second career. He was appointed as a Commissioner with the Department of Veterans Affairs in Charlottetown P.E.I. Jim and Rosmarie worked to set up another wonderful home with a big yard backing onto a park with many wonderful neighbours. Throughout summer evenings you could find Jim enjoying a beer or glass of wine on the back deck or with one of his neighbourhood friends. Many fond memories were made in P.E.I.; some favorites being picnics and walks on the beach on the north shore of the island – summer or winter. Jim and his family all loved P.E.I. As a Commissioner Jim travelled widely to hear the cases brought before him and his fellow commissioners. This work required him to hear the facts presented, to consider them in an impartial and fair manner, and render a written decision. This was where his innate sense of justice and fairness and his compassion shone through. He excelled at his work and was highly respected by his colleagues. If circumstances had been different, he would have loved to remain and retire on the island. But in 1992 he was asked to open the Veterans Affairs office in Calgary, and so his life came full circle as he returned to the place of his birth.

Jim his wife Rosmarie and their daughters settled in Airdrie. It is there that Jim eventually retired from a long and distinguished career. In Airdrie Jim was closer (in proximity) to his mother. There were many family get togethers with a lot of laughs. Jim and his mom shared the same great sense of humour. Jim saw his daughters graduate from high school and go on to become adults with lives and families of their own. He was forever proud of all his grandchildren near and far.

Had Jim’s health conditions been different he would have loved to have spent more time with his grandchildren (near and far) in the hockey rinks. Sharing in a sport that was always special for him.

In Airdrie, Jim met the next great love of his life, his dog Nikki. One of Jim’s greatest joys in retirement was walking with his dog(s) and family in the fields surrounding Airdrie. Nikki brought him much joy and she was with him in his heart until his passing. We believe they are now together, enjoying endless walks and hamburgers.

Unfortunately, as time went on, his life was restricted by chronic pain, a result from injuries obtained while on duty with the RCMP. There were ups and downs as he adapted to his ever-increasing disability. He was sustained in this by the love of his family, the heroic love and efforts of his wife Rosmarie and by his sports and music. Jim passed away surrounded by his family and in the hearts of those who couldn’t be by his side.

Mourning him deeply but confident that his spirit lives among them are his beloved wife of 47 years, Rosmarie, his daughters and grandchildren: Christina (John), Cameron and Emily, Sandra (Kevin), Damon and Alena, Maureen (Cody), his brothers, Louis (Marilyn) and Andy (Jenny), and his sister; Dorothy, as well as his cousins and nieces and nephews.

The last words are Jim’s own:

“Amen to the Great Spirit in the Sky in letting us trespass on this sacred earth for all our walks. Like the wind we came, like the wind we shall go.”

Messages of Condolence

Dear Rosmarie

Sincere condolences to you and your family. Very interesting and well written obituary on Jim's life.

Sorry I can not be there for the celebration of Jim's life, but my prayers and thoughts are with you.

David Gervais

— David Gervais

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Printed on October 5, 2026