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Raymond Neill



NEILL, Raymond - It is with great sorrow tempered by merciful relief that the family of Dr. Raymond Neill announces his gentle passing Monday afternoon, May 11/2015. Raymond was born in Port Aurthur, Thunder Bay September 24, 1928 to George and Lyla Neill (nee Barber.) Raymond adored his mother and embraced her love of the natural world and it's wondrous geography, plant life and creatures. He inherited his fierce Irish "zeal", steadfast conviction, devout work ethic and devilish sense of humour from his father "Paddy". Pranks later conceived of from within "the Shambles" became legend in student beverage rooms and dormitories thanks to Paddy's influence. During his public-school days Raymond displayed a sensitive disposition and an imaginative, inquisitive demeanor. He quickly developed into a voracious reader who devoured all of the textbooks and literature he could find. Socrates, Plato, Newton and Darwin. Zane Grey, Kipling, Robert Louis

Stevenson and Mark Twain. All became as visceral as Rocket Richard, Dickie Duff, Sandy Koufax and Babe Ruth to an insatiable young Canadian boy exploring the far-reaches of the Universe from the confines of his northern-Ontario bedroom. Raymond understood then that there was nowhere he could not travel using his formidable imagination. By the time Raymond finished high school he had blossomed into one of Northern Ontario's best track and field athletes becoming Ontario high-school mile champion, running in the 4:18's years before Bannister's legendary performance. Later on while away at school in the East he would break longtime University records in both distance running and weightlifting, while simultaneously achieving his Black Belt in Judo. Ray would later combine this athleticism with his passion for Baseball and Hockey and his innate flare for teaching-passing on his love of athletics to his sons whom he coached and nurtured becoming a long-time fixture at both the Harold Harvey Arena enjoying Church Athletic League matchups and later installing himself as honorary Mascot and pitching coach of the Ponies at Megaffin Park for many memorable years. Raymond earned a Science degree from McMaster University in 1950, and then studied Medicine at the University of Toronto, graduating in 1954. While at Mac Raymond met and fell in love with his only girlfriend and true love Beverly Butler. They married in 1958 in her hometown of St. Catherines, Ontario. She was "the only nurse who could make my pulse and temperature spike," he would fondly recall to anyone who would listen. Dr. Neill interned at the Toronto Western Hospital, while Mrs. Neill worked as an RN at the Wellesley Hospital also in Toronto. Then, giving up hopes of becoming a deep-sea Oceanographer Raymond declined the opportunity to work with Jacques Cousteau in the Greek Islands thru an internship and returned home to northern Ontario to practice medicine at the Spence Clinic in Thunder Bay- fulfilling one of his mother's lifelong dreams. After 2 years he decided to specialize in

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Anesthesia and entered the training program at the Toronto General Hospital. Upon completion of his residency In Anesthesia Ray was offered the prestigious McLaughlin Fellowship which he declined- preferring instead to go back to the Spence Clinic. 2 years later, in 1964, he accepted an invitation to join the Faculty of Medicine of Queen's University in the Anesthesia Department establishing the first cardio-pulmonary unit in the area to use respirators for treating patients with severe breathing difficulty. Raymond remained highly competent and greatly respected throughout his 31 years as a specialist in Anesthesia first at the Kingston General Hospital and then for the majority of his career up until his retirement in 1994 at the Hotel Dieu Hospital, on Brock St. in Kingston. Dr. Raymond Neill lived every day with humility. He treated every patient, rookie nurse and hospital Administrator with the same dignity, respect and care. OK- maybe NOT the bureaucrats- and we applauded him for that. Ray was the kind of guy who would say what we all were thinking and take the rap for everyone. He was our Captain. It is a rare privilege indeed to personally know your heroes. Dr. Neill's extended family of Nurses- in whose company he felt most comfortable whether enjoying legendary lunches at the Fontainebleau or tirelessly performing the grueling demands of the job- they were HIS heroes. There is a quote from Atticus in To Kill a Mockingbird that reads- "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it." Climbing inside the skin of Ray Neill you discover- he was our very own Atticus Finch. Dr. Raymond Neill is survived by his wife Beverly, his sons Todd and Christopher, his daughter Michelle, and his 2 nieces Jan and Judy Fair. Joyfully expecting Raymond's long-awaited arrival are his brother-in law Ross Fair and his best friend and loyal companion Jomo, his beloved Rhodesian Ridgeback, as well as many more cherished friends and colleagues. The family would like to acknowledge the noble, herculean efforts made by the staff on the Palliative Ward 2nd floor at St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital in Kingston Ontario. Nurses were Dad's favorite humans. He married one. He always passionately maintained the upmost respect for them. He felt that they are the backbone and soul of every hospital. They do the majority of the work and receive none of the accolades. They are the true healers of body and soul. Instead of flowers, donations can be made to: 1. The Ontario Nurses Federation Kingston Office. <http://cnf-fiic.ca/donate/#.VVXGxpNViko> 2. THE ONTARIO SPCA's online donation page to help animals in need. <http://www.ontariospca.ca/ways-to-give.html> 3. Become a member of The Right to Die Society of Canada. <http://www.righttodie.ca/12931369>

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Kindest Thoughts of you and your family

Posted by Linda Queen-Cannon & family (Friends of Todd) On Sunday, May 17, 2015
Heartfelt sympathies to you and your Family ,Todd. I was unaware that your Dad and Jim were both alumnus of McMaster U. Wishing you well in the caring of your Mom. And thank you for thoughts of us as well.

Linda,Todd and Tanya

Formally of Kennedy St

With thoughts of you & your family

Posted by Sharon Neill (Mrs. Robin Neill) (cousin) On Sunday, May 17, 2015
Raymond's 1st cousin Robin (my husband) died in June, so we are walking the same path. So many stories of the four Neill boys, and I had the pleasure of meeting you & Raymond in your home many years ago.

My heart goes out to you at this sad time.

((Hugs)) Sharon

Goodbye my friend

Posted by Don Taylor (Colleague and friend) On Saturday, May 16, 2015
Uncle Ray, what a man 36 years working with Ray...an amazing doc and special friend over the years. We shared some of those times recently with Ray, most important to me,it was time to go and he accepted the passage with special class.

With sadness

Posted by Terry Haw (Christy's friend) On Saturday, May 16, 2015
My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. May your God be with you all at this most difficult time of your life. Raymond will be remembered as a wonderful human being.

Wonderful man!

Posted by Margaret Frise (friend) On Saturday, May 16, 2015

So sorry to read about Ray. He was a wonderful gentle man; I worked with him in the OR at HDH for many years. He was always very generous, having meals brought in when we were busy and for special occasions or taking us out to eat. He stood up for the nurses always, had a wealth of trivia and interesting knowledge, a wicked laugh and a great sense of humour. In later years, he always stopped to chat whenever I saw him around town. Such a great guy, have many fond memories of working with him!

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