

## BAIRD, Bruce Douglas May 2nd, 1932 – October 23rd, 2012

Bruce was born in Calgary into a very musical and artistic family. During World War II, the family relocated to Victoria. A gifted athlete, Bruce excelled at swimming, diving, and gymnastics, much of his skill developed by swimming in the waters and diving off the bridge of the Gorge. He was coached by Archie McKinnon and turned down an offer to train for the Olympics. Bruce was an imp and a clown with a keen sense of humour. He put all these traits to good use when he and a pal used to entertain people at the Crystal Gardens performing as an acrobat and clown. The acts included trapeze, riding bicycles off the diving tower, showing off his considerable diving skills and many other feats. His future wife, Cecile, remembers seeing the act as a teenager and wondered what kind of idiot would attempt those things. Little did she know then! Bruce attended Victoria High School where he apparently was a magician. He knew how to make all the chairs in a classroom disappear while the teacher was out of the classroom for a minute or two. There were some other mysterious happenings alluded to in the yearbook for the year 1951. Why did the classroom doors fall inward instead of opening out and what about that mysterious explosion? Alas, the answers to those questions have gone with Bruce, although we do know that the chairs were tied to the pulls for the Venetian blinds and hung out the windows! Bruce achieved his career goal when he became a member of the RCMP on January 9, 1952 and was posted to Saskatchewan. During his first five years of service he travelled around the province providing coverage where necessary, sometimes only spending a few days at a particular detachment. They were interesting times and he reckoned that he worked in almost every detachment in the province at one time or another. The years spent in the RCMP resulted in many lifelong friendships. Bruce always sought to improve himself and earned diplomas in Municipal, Business, and Personnel Administration through UBC. He studied at Rutgers University, the Johnson Institute for Chemical Dependency, and became a Registered Social Worker. Bruce had an inquiring and forward mind; throughout the years of his various careers he received numerous awards for his innovative ideas from designing a better diary date system for the RCMP to significant cost saving strategies at the Ministry of Health. During the early 1970s he identified concerns within the RCMP and he was tasked with implementing the first Employee Assistance Program (now known as MEAP). In typical fashion he committed 150% to this pioneer program. Bruce was extremely proud that this program has grown from him being the single coordinator, to having employee referral agents and resources throughout the national organization. He worked against the social mores and culture of the organization, which at that time took a toll on his health. As he felt that this was his true vocation, it was to his great disappointment that he had to leave his work in 1979. Bruce was honoured to be a member of the RCMP and retired with the rank of S/Sgt. Subsequent employment found him as a counselor at Gillain Manor and later as a hospital insurance investigator with the Ministry of Health. He loved both jobs, the first which provided him with opportunities to use his considerable counseling skills, and the latter which took him back to his roots; he loved the opportunity to use his intrepid investigative skills. Throughout his various careers and endeavours, Cecile, his wife of 55 years, supported and encouraged his goals. As parents of 4 girls Bruce & Cecile were busy. Among other things, Bruce built backyard skating rinks in the prairie winters, taught them to swim and dive, wrote essays, taught math, delivered

telephone books and cookies. He and Cecile were just as supportive of their girls as adults and contributed in no small measure to the lives of their 8 grandchildren. Pets came and went in the household but none so special as his beloved dog, Jackson, who has been anxiously awaiting his master and will be truly happy to see him. Bruce pursued his interest in technology to his final days. He recently purchased a new iMac, learned and documented how to type the Greek alphabet, had Twitter, Facebook and Skype accounts and regularly trounced his daughters and grandson at online Scrabble. His girls came from far and wide and Bruce died peacefully, surrounded by love in their presence. He leaves behind his wife, Cecile, daughters and families; Gwen (Pete Hardy), Jim (Shawna) and Alix Baldwin; Brenda (Frank), Reilly and Marshall Passmore; Donna (Shane) and Michaela Baird; Jane (Trent), Tyson, Vienna, and Tiggy Abbott; his sister Joan (Bill) Bryson; brother-in-law Charles Clayton; sister-in-law Geri Clayton and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Bruce was hospitalized briefly at Royal Jubilee Hospital where he was attended to in the most professional and caring manner. His family especially thanks all of the nursing staff on 4-South as well as Dr. Cheek and Dr. Coppin for their compassionate guidance. Thank you also to BC Ambulance, the Victoria Epilepsy and Parkinson's Centre, in particular Maureen Matthews, for ongoing support. A private family memorial will be held. Flowers gratefully declined. In lieu, memorial gifts may be made to Canadian Cancer Society, Parkinson's Society of BC or the Victoria Hospice Foundation.



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