



**SMYTH, Donald Ross (1947) (Teaching staff)**

**1929-2022**

Donald Ross Smyth took his final breath on the morning of May 29, 2022, with son Kevin by his side. His 93 years were full, though for the past eleven years he dearly missed the company of his wife, Lorraine, who passed away in 2011. Don was predeceased by his older sisters Kay and Erma; niece Katherine Cunningham; sister-in-law Joyce; son-in-law, David Robert Tooms; and most recently, twin sister Aileen and her husband Dick Okros. Don is survived by seven children, twelve grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, and one more on the way, as well as numerous nieces and nephews and their families. He is sadly missed by them all. Don was

known and loved for his charm, wit, and character, and for his appreciation of the simpler things in life: chocolate milk and cookies; Easter Egg hunts with his grandkids; fishing trips with his family without even the remotest possibility of success.

He made science enjoyable and accessible for his students; he mentored and encouraged young people to reach for their goals; he instilled a sense of fair play in those he coached; and he displayed his sizable soft skills with people in general, making them feel valued and important and helping them put things into proper perspective. Don meant many things to many people. He will be fondly remembered as being a great father, father-in-law, uncle, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He will be remembered as a loving husband, friend, and confidant.

He will be remembered by some as Victoria's Head Lifeguard at Elk, Beaver, and Thetis Lakes during the 1960's and into the 1970's. He will be remembered as an outstanding teacher, a highly respected educator, an esteemed coach and, in his retirement, a beloved farmer who set a high bar for anyone who aspired to productivity and aesthetics.

Don's successful education career was vast and varied. He will be remembered as a teacher and school administrator in Victoria; as a Superintendent of Schools in Terrace, Cariboo-Chilcotin, and Saanich school districts; and in his Ministry of Education role where he was a liaison for all School Superintendents in BC. Regardless of his role, Don emphasized collaboration and inclusivity, and consistently displayed his caring, and compassionate side to everyone he encountered. His thoughtful, pragmatic approach to school and district leadership also made him a 'go-to' person for colleagues across the province. Other notable highlights of his life included being an important builder and coach in the sport of volleyball, becoming the first elected President of the Canadian Volleyball Association, coaching Men's Volleyball at UVIC, coaching the Canadian National Women's Team at the Pan Am Games and NORCECA, and most recently being inducted into the BC Volleyball Hall of Fame. Don's swimming background and leadership skills also resulted in his appointment as Aquatics Chair for the 1994 Victoria Commonwealth Games which included proudly hosting Queen Elizabeth at the Commonwealth Pool.

For the past 41 years, Don enjoyed his life on the small farm in North Saanich where he and Lorraine created an agricultural paradise out of a former hayfield. It was a creation based on giving - which really is at the core of farming - and is something he carried with him from his maternal Ross Family who farmed the Battle River area of Alberta. His cousin, Alan Wilson, always made mention that our parents' small acreage was about the size he required to park his combines, tractors, and other farm equipment! Don enjoyed such gentle ribbing. A homebody, he was most content on the farm where he welcomed family and friends with open arms. He will be missed by the many folks he and Lorraine provided with not only a bounty of produce but also the warmth and friendship that grew from life on the farm.

For the past twenty months Don was in the wonderful care of the staff at the Long-Term Care Unit at Saanich Peninsula Hospital. As a family, we would like to mention how grateful and honored we are for your commitment to others. You make the world a better place. (Don would have been the first to mention this.) We would also like to thank Dr. Layne Woodburn for his many years not only as Don's doctor, but also for his lighthearted touch and for his gentle ribbing! Don was uncomfortable being the center of attention, preferring to make note of others. He would be happy to ask those who read this to give equal attention to all the others whose life stories rub up against his. He is after all, one of the many. Safe home to all. The family, Karen Thiessen (John), Clint (Aileen), Brett (Tilda), Kevin (Jennifer), Chris Tooms (Rob, d.2011), Greg (Tracy) and Drew (Mary), are planning a service with details to follow in the near future.

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