

JOHN A. MACDONELL



DR. JOHN A. MACDONELL Dr. John (Jack) A. MacDonell, CM, MD, FRCPC, Professor Emeritus, Department of Medicine, University of Manitoba born in Edmonton, Alberta on July 18, 1918, died in Toronto on April 29, 2011. He was the cherished and beloved husband and best friend of Asa, his wife of 68 years, devoted father of Fina (Tim), and proud Afi (grandfather) of Arwen. He was predeceased by his parents Lillian and Alexander Duncan (Mac) MacDonell, and his only sibling, a sister, Anna Margery Gerry. Jack graduated from the University of Manitoba Medical School in 1943, and immediately volunteered for the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps. Between 1943 and 1946, he served in Canada, England and Northwestern Europe. After the War, Jack completed post-graduate studies in Winnipeg and in London, England, with a focus on chest disease. But by 1960, Jack had articulated a course of study and practice that would shape the rest of his career. That year, he received a scholarship from the National Council of Jewish Women to return to Europe to visit hospitals and centres for the elderly in England, Holland, Belgium, and Scandinavia. These experiences led Jack to advocate a multi-disciplinary approach to care for the elderly that recognized their dignity and continuing capabilities. He worked with other doctors, nurses, and therapists to develop a patient-centred model of geriatrics that recognized the desire of the elderly to work, play, and love to their fullest capacity. For these contributions in Canada, and around the world, Jack was awarded the Order of Canada in 1976. In Winnipeg, Jack helped to build many of the health service models that are common today. He was one of the first presidents of the Age and Opportunity Bureau. He was instrumental in establishing three geriatric units for the assessment and rehabilitation of the elderly, three Day Hospitals for the elderly, readmission programs, community home care services, the Advanced Certificate Program in Gerontology and a section of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Manitoba, and the first Geriatric Clinical Teaching Unit in Canada. Nationally, he was a founding and executive member of the Canadian Association of Gerontology, a President of the Canadian Society of Geriatric Medicine, the Chair of the first and second Canadian Conference on Aging, and an active participant in the Secretariat on Aging of the Canadian Council on Social Development. He also chaired a subcommittee of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada that led to the establishment of Geriatrics as a specialty in Canada. By the end of his career, Jack had received the Distinguished Member Award from the Canadian Association on Gerontology, the Outreach Award from the University of Manitoba, the Queen's Anniversary Medals, and Honorary Memberships in several associations. On retirement in 1984, his colleagues established a scholarship in his name at the University of Manitoba, and in 1988, they recognized him with the rank of Professor Emeritus in

Medicine at the same University. Jack also chaired the Clinical Medicine Sections of the Gerontological Society of America for many years, was the Canadian representative and an Executive Member of the International Association on Gerontology, and a key figure in establishing two-way educational and professional exchanges between Canada and the United Kingdom. Jack was one of the rare men who combined commitment to his profession with a love for his family. He met his wife in high school, and convinced her to go on a date by obtaining opera tickets, as she was very fond of music (she played the violin). He learned to speak Icelandic. Asa's parents emigrated from Iceland, and Icelandic was spoken in her home. Jack particularly liked how terms of endearment sounded in Icelandic. He took enormous pride in his daughter's and granddaughter's contributions to theatre. He was an avid golfer and an excellent cook. He touched many with his humour, his sophistication, his gentle way of teaching, and his modesty. He was a gentle gentleman. We love you and will miss you. At Jack's request, there will be no public funeral; a small private service will be held prior to cremation. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Doctors Asa and Jack MacDonell Bursary would be appreciated: account #9310927, c/o Department of Private Funding, University of Manitoba, 179 Continuing Education Complex, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2. Jack's family wish to thank Veterans Affairs Canada and staff, Sarasota Memorial Hospital and staff, Toronto Community Care Centre and staff, and Doctors Marc LeBeau, Joe Bilik, Maria Zorzitto, Patricia Harvey, and Barry Goldlist for their care and kindness. The family would also like to thank the staff at St. Michael's Hospital, caregiver June Douglas, the staff of The Simple Alternative, and the staff of The Rabbit's Choice.