



ALEX OLCHOWECKI
May 13, 1928 - March 2, 2020

Alex died peacefully in Lady Minto Hospital, Salt Spring Island, BC, following hip surgery. He was born in Sandilands, Manitoba, the seventh of eight children. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Victoria (Mosquin), nieces and nephews.

Alex was predeceased by his father Jacob, mother Frances (Monastyrski), five brothers, Peter, Paul, Roman, Sam, Michael, and two sisters, Helen Beyak and Jean Stark.

Sandilands is a small village on the C.N. Railroad line to the USA. He knew the woods, climbed jack pines, picked wild berries and mushrooms. In winter, with his older brothers, provided rabbit and venison. He attended Lonesand, the local one-room school for grades one to eight.

Because his father was a section man for the CN Railroad that ran by the hamlet, the family had a free pass. For grade nine, Alex took the train twice daily to Sainte Anne. High school was in Teulon: the United Church ran a student residence. In 1946, Alex attended St. Andrews College in Winnipeg where he formed friendships that he maintained for the rest of his life.

After cutting pulpwood in bush camps of Ontario and two years plying the Great Lakes shipping iron ore on the Algorail, he decided to go to Edmonton. There, pouring concrete for the city's curbs, and being on unemployment insurance led him to try long distance trucking. He loved driving the Kenworths and the trips gave him opportunity for quick visits to relatives and friends scattered across Ontario and Manitoba.

At age 30, he decided to go back to university, beginning with two summer school courses at the University of Manitoba. Here he met Victoria, who was working on her B.A. They married two years later. Alex continued trucking and after two years, they moved to Manitoba for him to begin his degree in Science. He received his Ph.D. in Mycology in 1972 and stayed with the Botany Department, teaching various courses, including photography until his retirement from the Faculty of Science in 1993.

The Sandilands Forest Reserve was a favourite destination for mushrooms, photography and picnicking with friends on the old family homestead. He was delighted, one year, to say he had filled the trunk of the car with morels. Travels to other countries always included visits to Botanical Gardens. As a member of the British Mycological Society, there was the pleasure of roaming the countryside with forays to Italy, Majorca, Spain and Portugal.

Al was an adventurous cook, barbecued a great steak, and hand made noodles for the Sunday chicken soup. He loved New Orleans jazz, his many cameras, small radios, and good tools. They moved to Salt Spring in September of 1993 looking for shorter winters and a longer tomato growing season. Winter gardening was a surprise and an adventure, not always successful. Alex delighted in the autumn harvesting of his apples, pears and plums. He joined the Farmers

Institute and over the years valued the Tuesday mornings working on the Fall Fair buildings and grounds. He was pleased to offer his tools: he had many and often more than one of a kind. He could not resist a bargain.

Following the independence of Ukraine, travel there became a possibility and several trips connected him with his father's natal village and his third generation relatives. Oleksa had much satisfaction in being able to support young relatives through medicine, the priesthood, computer science and law.

Throughout his life, Alex maintained friendships and stayed connected with family. To Victoria, he was a best friend and loving husband.

Cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will be held on Salt Spring on April 8.

Interment will take place in Winnipeg at Glen Eden Cemetery, the Orthodox Section. Notice of service will be given in May.

Donations in his memory may be made to St. Andrews College, Winnipeg.