

# Dr. Cy Frank

By Gillian Hawker, MD, FRCPC; and Dianne Mosher, MD, FRCPC

**D**r. Cy Frank, colleague, mentor and friend to many of us in rheumatology, passed away suddenly on March 5, 2015. He was a truly outstanding individual—a mensch. His legacy will live on.

Dr. Frank was an ardent supporter of a publicly funded healthcare system. He believed wholeheartedly that savings could be found through greater efficiency and effectiveness in our healthcare system. Most importantly, he believed that any dollars saved needed to be reinvested to improve health care for all Canadians. He was a passionate advocate for implementation of quality-of-care metrics: “We cannot fix the system unless we measure it!” He could not fathom—or tolerate—the notion of finding solutions without people with arthritis at our sides. He believed meaningful engagement of people with arthritis to be integral to the solution and insisted on their involvement in advocacy, research, development, and implementation of care-delivery models.

Some of us would tease Cy, noting that he behaved more like a rheumatologist than an orthopedic surgeon! Either way, he was a steadfast friend to rheumatology. As the first appointed scientific director of the Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis (IMHA) in 2000, Dr. Frank attended our CRA meeting with Mr. Denis Morrice, then President and CEO of The Arthritis Society (TAS). He wanted to ensure that rheumatology researchers were at the IMHA table. He was instrumental in the formation of the Arthritis Alliance of Canada (AAC) and was the wise advisor to Dr. John Esdaile, Ms. Cheryl Koehn, and ourselves in the mammoth undertaking that led to the Summit on Standards of Care for Arthritis. At the time of his death, he was co-chair for both the inflammatory arthritis (IA) and osteoarthritis (OA) models of care (MOC) working groups at the AAC. At 6 am every other Wednesday, he was on a conference call for the IA MOC group with Dr. Vandana Ahluwalia, Dr. Michel Zimmer, Dr. Anne Lydiatt, Dr. Jaime Coish, and Dr. Mosher, gently pointing them in the right direction. This was despite the fact he was CEO of Alberta Innovates Health Solutions (AIHS), on the Federal Minister of Health’s task force on innovation in health care, still performing surgery, all while serving on countless other committees.



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As an orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Frank was the first to perform arthroscopic surgery in Calgary. He was a great technical surgeon, but also a caring physician who always made time for his patients and would squeeze in that extra patient when you were concerned. He had a special interest in ligament repair and has fixed a few of us! Knowing that ligament repair did not prevent the development of OA, he set out to better understand this disease. He was successful in leading an OA team grant from AIHS for the past decade.

Among his many accomplishments was the establishment and evaluation of standardized care pathways for hip and knee replacements, including the implementation of centralized intake clinics for people seeking hip or knee replacement surgery. These health system innovations were shown to improve patient outcomes and reduce health care costs. Dr. Frank was internationally recognized for this pioneering work. Indicative of his far reach, upon learning of his death, Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England, called Dr. Frank’s longtime assistant Judy to express her disbelief and sympathies.

Dr. Frank’s accomplishments were many. He was founding Director of both the McCaig Bone and Joint Institute and the Alberta Bone and Joint Health Institute. He did this with support from business leader and philanthropist J.R. McCaig.

Dr. Frank was a modest man. In 2014 he received the Order of Canada, which he did not even tell his sons about until two weeks later, never wearing his pin. He was a proud Albertan and loved the mountains and his cabin in Kananaskis. He had a passion for fixing old cars, especially Mustangs! One of his proudest moments was when he was able to perform surgery with his son Tym, an orthopedic resident in Vancouver.

He has guided many of us in our career decisions. We all felt that he was personally invested in our success. He had all the time in the world to talk to us and have a coffee, for which he always paid. Papa Cy, we will miss you!

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