

Tribute to Dr. Robert "Bob" McKendry

By Gunnar Kraag, MD, FRCPC

Dr. Bob McKendry passed away on December 26, 2020. He was the driving force in establishing academic rheumatology at the University of Ottawa and also helped establish the Northern Ontario School of Medicine in his role as Assistant Dean of Postgraduate Education in the Faculty of Medicine.

Bob graduated from Queen's University in 1968. He received his Internal Medicine training in Toronto and was the Chief Medical Resident at the Wellesley Hospital. He did his rheumatology training at the Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation in La Jolla, California.

He returned to Ottawa in 1974 and quickly became the Director of the University of Ottawa Rheumatic Disease Unit.

He was successful in dramatically raising the profile of rheumatology in Ottawa and started a Royal College Training Program in rheumatology. He was able to attract excellent Fellows, many of whom subsequently joined the Division.

Bob exemplified the excellence of an academic as a clinician, educator and researcher. As a clinician he was an excellent diagnostician and developed superb rapport with his patients, earning their gratitude and respect.

Bob was a superb teacher and mentor to undergraduate and postgraduate trainees.

As a researcher, he authored some 60 peer-reviewed papers. In 2002, he created a private research clinic. He became CEO of Rheumatology Research Associates, where he was the principal investigator for more than 50 industry-sponsored clinical trials.

His many professional accomplishments include his role as Chairman of the Division of Rheumatology at the University of Ottawa, Deputy Chairman and Acting Chairman of the Department of Medicine, Assistant Dean Postgraduate Education, as well as serving on numerous professional associations and international committees.

He was the recipient of many awards throughout his career and was particularly proud of receiving the Commonwealth Medal for the 125th anniversary of the Confederation of Canada, awarded by the Governor General in December of 1992 – "in recognition of significant contribution to compatriots, community and to Canada." He also received an Award of Excellence from the Department of Medicine at the University of Ottawa. He received several awards recogni-



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zing his volunteer service to programs of the Arthritis Society in Ontario.

There was much more to Bob than his academic and professional activities. He had a wide array of interests that included running, gardening, skiing and extensive travelling. Flowers were a particular passion, and he added a greenhouse at the back of his house so he could enjoy gardening all year round.

His favourite pastime was undoubtedly putting at his cottage on Calumet Island. Building may be more accurate than putting. The cottage was a true passion.

Bob loved good company, and his wit and wry sense of humour were legendary. We were all privileged to know him.

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