

Ahead of his time

Patrick Rose MD, CCFP(LM), FCFP (1915-2011)

On January 23, 2011, the world lost a valuable and highly respected physician and beloved man in Dr Patrick Rose. A vibrant character, Dr Rose was a founding member of the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) (then, the College of General Practice of Canada) and served as president from

1958 to 1959. "We were thrilled to celebrate his 94th birthday with him on stage during Family Medicine Forum in Calgary in 2009," Cal Gutkin, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the CFPC, recalls. Aged 95, Dr Rose was the longest living Past President of the CFPC.


Born in Edmonton, Alta, Dr Rose received his medical degree from the University of Alberta in 1942. Having served his country as a member of the Medical Corps during World War II, upon his return in 1946 Dr Rose started his family practice, and so began his journey to champion family medicine in Canada. Before his presidency of the College, Dr Rose served as honorary treasurer for 2 years and chairman of the board for 1 year. Concerned about the quality of family medicine and the education of family physicians in Canada, during his presidency Dr Rose traveled to various Chapter meetings across the country in his commitment to establishing the College as a national educational entity in Canada, thus spreading and heralding the importance of family medicine.

From 1966 to 1972 Dr Rose stepped into politics, serving as Alberta's Deputy Minister of Health. He was particularly honoured to play a pivotal role in the formation

of the W.W. Cross Cancer Institute. Included among his many achievements was his receipt of the Alberta Physicians of the Century Award in 2005, awarded to physicians who had contributed to the advancement of medicine over the previous 100 years. With a passion for medicine and for his role as a physician, Dr Rose was often seen making housecalls and took pleasure in serving and treating his patients.

Dr Richard Spooner, Chair of the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Alberta and Past President of the CFPC, reflected on Dr Rose's contributions: "Dr Rose was one of the great pioneers of the College. We take for granted just how far our College has come in the last many years, but we wouldn't be where we are without the devoted, and sometimes lonely, work of people like Pat Rose."

Dr Rose's contributions to society did not lie solely in family medicine. Perhaps the secret to his long life was his love for family and friends and his belief in giving back to the community. Engaging in long-time activities such as golf and curling, Dr Rose thoroughly enjoyed life and was fond of reading, fine foods, single-malt scotch, music, and card games. He also served on several different committees and organizations, including the Edmonton Kinsmen Club. Dr Rose will be remembered as a well-mannered gentleman who passionately served his community and profession at every opportunity. Beloved husband to his late wife, Helen, he will be greatly missed by his children, Catharine and Carolyn; his grandchildren and great-grandchildren; other family members; friends; and colleagues.

Although his family, friends, and colleagues feel his loss, Dr Rose's zest for life lives on through those whose lives he touched; his pivotal contribution to family medicine in Canada is a legacy to the CFPC. Dr Gutkin remembers Dr Rose as "a man ahead of his time. He saw the College as primarily an educational body but one that must also take a political stand on behalf of family doctors He was a true supporter of the CFPC until the end of his life." 

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