

Gavin Hollas – Ol' Blue Eye

Born November 24, 1932, in Irvine, Ayrshire Scotland.

Passed away on January 14, 2021 in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

Predeceased by his brothers, Jimmy, Bill, Bobby, Andy, and his sister Bette.

Survived by the love of his life Elizabeth (Betty), his daughter Susan Elaine (Russell), his grandchildren Cailey Arran (Stephen), Lauren Skye (Sean), and great-grandchildren, Noah, Penelope, Sydney, Oscar and Charlotte. Also survived by his brother John, and nieces and nephews in Scotland, Australia and across Canada.

Gavin passed away peacefully at the age of 88, with his daughter by his side at his home at AVENS. He loved his family immensely and prioritized his love for them every day of his life. In his final weeks, his biggest smiles and chuckles came when he got to see, speak and sing with his great-grandchildren.

When we sit and try to memorialize such an amazing man, our minds are quickly overwhelmed with funny stories, precious memories and countless lessons Gavin left us with. Gavin was happiest when supporting his family. He spent so much of his life cheering his grandchildren on in their sports and their schooling. Gavin was immensely proud of his daughter Susan's entrepreneurship and the life she built for her family. Becoming a Great Grandfather was an amazing upgrade in Gavin's life, his heart swelled with love and he showed that every time he was in their company.

Gavin had several passions outside of his family; golf, watching soccer, Old Blue Eyes Frank Sinatra (where one-eyed Gavin got his nickname), movies from his young adulthood, singing, chocolate and airplanes.

Gavin could tell you the name of a plane flying overhead by the sound of the engine. He and Betty would often bring a picnic and park at the end of the long runway at their old home in Toronto to watch the planes coming and going for an entire day. When Gavin's family would visit, he would be at the airport hours before arrival so he could ensure he saw our plane's descent and taxiing to the gate. Any time you left Gavin's home for the airport, after he and Betty dropped you off at the security gate, they would find the parking spot alongside the fence at runway 23 at Toronto Pearson Airport and would wave to the plane as we would taxi past and take off. Cailey & Lauren, Gavin's grandchildren would hope to get the window seat so they could be the lucky ones to see Grandpa & Grandma waving to us. We always knew it was them by the sight of Grandpa's big white Tilley hat waving at us.

Gavin's journey was made easier by the kindness and care of several people. Gavin's family would like to thank:

- The staff in the Cedar Cottages and the Recreation team at AVENS for taking such great care of Gavin during his five years there. You all became part of his family and we loved to see the smile on his face when you would greet and chat with him.
- Dr Pelova & Nurse Emily for your communication and gentle care.
- To the AVENS staff members who were working the night and morning that Gavin passed – thank you for your soft and caring words, your gentle touch, and for sharing in our grief.
- Janice & Andrew and the team at McKenna Funeral Home for your lovely preparation and assistance with Gavin's farewell.
- Peter Mercredi for being Gavin's final family member to wave him off on his plane ride to cremation, your gift will be held in our hearts forever, Pete.
- Every single Yellowknifer who stopped and paid respect to Gavin during his procession through town.
- Finally, to the outpouring of messages, cards, texts and notes from family and friends since Gavin's passing, we are loving being reminded of all the connections Gavin made in his long and beautiful life.

A lovely, private family viewing was held on January 19 at McKenna Funeral Home. On January 20, Gavin was flown to Edmonton for cremation. During his procession to the airport Gavin's small family bubble were riding behind him on the AVENS bus, with Gavin's eternal love, Betty holding his Tilley hat in her hands. Gavin flew on Canadian North (an airline he was fond of because of the wine served with dinner!) for his final plane ride. His family were out on Range Lake ice with sparklers while we waved his plane goodbye when it took off.

In lieu of flowers – if you knew Gavin, please share a story or memory with his family. We are building a legacy book and want to hear every memory we possibly can. E-mail to caileymerc@gmail.com please.

