



Philip Gordon MacQuarrie

August 28, 1966 — October 24, 2023

Philip Gordon MacQuarrie passed from action to memory on October 24th, 2023. He was 57. Having prevailed over leukemia, his death from a common infection seems deeply unfair, and yet Phil met it, as he had borne the entirety of his disease and its treatments, with Stoical courage and that trenchant, quick, and clever wit that imprinted on others as his signature mark.

Phil was born in Toronto, but grew up rural on a 100 acre farm that had everything a growing boy could want or need: fields over which to roam, structures to be explored or reengineered, and a pond in which to sink. Swimming, it turns out, was never Phil's thing. Books however were, and that old farmhouse held plenty. Phil read voraciously as a child: classic literature, fantasy, science fiction, humour, history (and most especially military history) all proved fine grist for his hungry mind.

Phil's interest in all things martial ran deep. It was reflected in his penchant for strategy games and military modeling as well as a period of service with the Royal Canadian Regiment which took him to Germany and from which he resigned a junior non-commissioned officer. Curiously, Phil was never ambitious for promotion or recognition. He took his duty and responsibilities seriously, but never allowed the military, nor any of his subsequent employers, to encase or define him. Work for Phil was the thing that allowed him to read, to travel, and to experience life. He did not confuse it for Living.

His journey, especially later in life, took him to many places and he found travel rich and rewarding. His latest residence in Nunavut was an experience he cherished; the friends he made there, he valued greatly. Wherever Phil stayed, he had a wonderful quality of putting people at ease and his genuine curiosity about others enabled him to forge real and lasting bonds with people near and far. He may not have always seen how much of an impact he had on others and how he touched their lives in positive ways.

He hated to impose, and he hated to disappoint. Of the many torments he endured with leukemia, dependence was perhaps the hardest, but it was made so much easier by the compassion of his care providers at Cancer Care Manitoba and especially the team on D6 at the Health Science Centre where dignity is afforded the same status as blood or bone. Friends and family will never be able to thank these folks adequately for what they have done, but Dr. Brown should know that many of us will never look on the Chiefs in quite the same way, either.

The other person that Phil would want thanked, he never met, but somewhere in the world a person with blood almost exactly the same as Phil's own, registered as a stem cell donor and sent a man whom he would never meet, a chance to live. The enormity of this gift is humbling: it is hope, and kindness, and possibility. Thanks then to all who commit themselves to such transformative generosity.

Please consider a donation to Cancer Care Manitoba and Canadian Blood services in honour of Phil. And if you are able please consider registering with the Bone Marrow registry as you have the power to save a life.