

DR. RICHARD ROSS WHEELER

July 4, 1941 - March 29, 2012

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.*

After growing up in Toronto, graduating from medical school and being posted as a military doctor across Canada, Ross came to the NWT to settle in Yellowknife in the early seventies. He loved the North; the strength of the spirit of its people, the rugged beauty of the land and its many lakes, and the pace and cultural richness of Northern life. He often found peace and enjoyment boating, camping and fishing on the Eastern Arm of Great Slave Lake. Through his general practice and his 30 + years on staff at Stanton Territorial Hospital, "Doctor Wheeler" touched the lives of many, many people across the North. His passionate focus on mental health and addictions medicine became the vehicle for his down-to-earth style, grounded in a boundless capacity for empathy based on shared personal experience. As a member of the Territorial and National Drug and Alcohol boards, he was a driving force in efforts to assist people to find their path to healing and wellbeing. He will be sadly missed by communities, families and individuals whose lives he enriched across the North and in his second home, Maui.

Ross passed away peacefully on the morning of Thursday, March 29, 2012 at the age of 70. He is survived by his wife Laura, her children Lucas and Leah; and his children Amy (Joe), Stewart (Brian), Melissa (Murray) and Jesse. He will also be fondly remembered by his sister Lyn, his nephew Adam and by Gail Cyr and Linda Jane Cornelisse.

He was a proud and much-loved "Grandpa Ross" to Anna, Matteo, Lily, Charlotte, Stella, Jude and Sacha.

Over the years, Ross was involved with many organizations doing important work at the local level in the North: Northern Addiction Services, AA, the Dene Nation, Aurora Oxford House, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation of Canada, Crack-busters at the Tree of Peace, MADD, the John Howard Society, as well as groups with national and international reach such as Habitat for Humanity, the Trans-Canada Trail and World Vision. In lieu of flowers, donations to a local Yellowknife charity, or to the Heart and Stroke Foundation, would be appreciated by the family.



"If I know what love is, it is because of you." – Herman Hesse