



## REMEMBERING Hugh Sinclair

December 3, 2021



Hugh Sinclair passed away peacefully on December 3, 2021 at the age of 87, in the Village of Kaslo. His battle with serious medical issues started in 1966 when he was diagnosed with cancer. A married father of four young children, Hugh fought and won the battle with cancer several more times over the decades, ultimately succumbing to renal failure when his kidneys stopped working in late November 2021. His decline was swift with barely any time for gathering family and friends, notwithstanding Covid restrictions, historic flooding in BC, and a host of other challenges that required finding creative ways to say our final goodbyes.

Hugh Sinclair was a father and grandpa to a large family; he was also a devoted husband to Nancy Sinclair. Married in 1959, they lived together for 62 years, just starting their 63rd year of marriage living life to the fullest. Hugh retired on a disability pension at 55 with an itch to travel. On a tight budget and with an eye for a deal, they traveled to Mexico as snowbirds for several years towing a fifth wheel trailer. The rig wandered through Mexico, with Nancy cooking the meals and baking bread in the tiny oven. Eventually stopping in Cancun, they bought a larger fifth wheel, parked it and built a Palapa for shade. Hugh learned to dive and earned his Dive Instructor certificate. Over the next few years of snow-birding, Hugh accumulated 1000 dives, taking numerous newbies on their first dives without incident. Nancy took up painting while she waited for Hugh to return from his dives with fresh fish or lobster in tow. After Mexico, it was a world tour of Europe, Asia, Thailand, and Greece during the winter months. There were almost no restaurants or fancy events in their world travels; it was a shoestring affair involving backpacks, a few items of clothing, and an unfaltering sense of optimism that followed them everywhere they went. They would find a little apartment and live like the locals. Inevitably Nancy learned to cook the local cuisine while Hugh provided the ingredients and culinary critiques. Eventually health and age dulled the travel bug, so Hugh and Nancy settled into life in Kaslo. There they watched their daughter Laurie raise her children and went to countless hockey games to see them play.

Hugh was always looking for ways to pay it forward, donating to charitable causes, and through volunteering. He spent time at the school in Kaslo tutoring kids in math, reading, and photography. Hugh also worked on the Kaslo infoNet project bringing affordable internet to the underserved region and helped his friends and neighbors with all kinds of things. Photography was a hobby he enjoyed and passed on to anyone who showed an interest. He learned to cook at 85 years old when Nancy's eyesight failed, turning into the master of the Instant Pot and barbecue.

Hugh joined the Canadian Navy in 1951, stationed in Halifax. He was posted to numerous ships during his sea time, earning his Electronics Technician classification. Hugh met his future wife Nancy during leave in Montreal, getting married within months. Their first child came in 1961 (Elaine), followed by another in 1963 (Laurie), 1964 (Paul), and 1966 (Hugh). Coincidentally the children's first initials spell HELP! During his time in the navy, he attained the rank of Chief Warrant Officer. Hugh enjoyed his Navy time, but always looked forward to coming ashore.

Hugh had a rapier wit, giving his nurses a taste of his dry sense of humor right up to the day before he passed. His pain tolerance was incredible - can you imagine having dental work without anesthetic? Even in his last days he did not want pain relief, much to the dismay of his care team. "I don't want to be a zombie" he said gritting his teeth. He was a tough old bird who outlasted most of his doctors, making life memorable for all of those around him. As his attention turned inward, Hugh's true character shined through. His last words were "How's Mom?" because she was his anchor to this world. We replied she was OK and that we had his back. With that said, Hugh closed his eyes, relaxed, and let his spirit start its eternal journey, passing away hours later. Neither agnostic nor religious, Hugh's belief in some sort of afterlife was strong. He is out there enjoying his new surroundings, touching our lives in our memories and dreams. Hugh lived his life to the fullest, never content to stay in one spot for long. He lived, laughed, and loved his way through life - something we all should try to do.

Predeceased by his sister Peggy and brother Michael, Hugh's surviving siblings Paul, Helen-Ann, and Marion (Sister Michaela) mourn their loss. Hugh is survived by his wife Nancy, his four kids Hugh (Angela), Elaine, Laurie (Mark), Paul (Rebecca), and his grandchildren: James, Jason, Sage, Catalina, Parker, Nicolas, Ember, and Chase. They all miss him and are glad he is at peace. Many of Hugh's good friends have passed away however Al Sylvester and Pamela Foster remained close to the end.

At Hugh's request, there will be no funeral or memorial service. Cremation has taken place, with Hugh's ashes scattered on Christmas day. In accordance with his wishes, the ashes were scattered in the Kaslo River, where they enjoyed a wild ride down the rapids into Kootenay Lake. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Kaslo Food Hub would be appreciated. [foodsecurity@nklcss.org](mailto:foodsecurity@nklcss.org)

"A good traveler has no fixed plans and is not intent upon arriving." Lao Tzu.

To leave a personal message of condolence please see the Thompson Funeral Service website <https://www.thompsonfs.ca>

