

Norman McMillan

2 June 1922 – 5 October 2015

Worked For:

Unknown – Avro Canada?

Position:

Avro Arrow project for three years

Obituary (online):



The world lost a remarkable man on October 5, 2015. Norman McMillan, a wonderful friend, mentor and connector of people extraordinaire, passed away in the palliative care at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, at age 93.

Born June 2, 1922 in Gateshead-On-Tyne, Great Britain, Norman was the beloved only child of Margaret and Arthur McMillan. Very early in his youth, the family moved to Scotland and there he developed a deep love of music and became fascinated with engineering. Norman served in the British Merchant Navy as a ship's engineer in North Africa and then notably on the HMS Queen Elizabeth troop transport ship during WWII, making 46 trips across the Atlantic.

Post war but still in wartime service to his country, he spent a memorable seven months on whaling expedition to the Antarctic. Soon after, for a "few laughs" with some of his seafaring pals, Norman made a trip to Canada fully expecting to return to Scotland to pursue his engineering degree. But fate interceded after he joined the '7000 Club' for British and Scottish immigrants to Canada and, one night at a dance, he met Christine, the love of his life.

Norman and Chris first made their first home in Toronto. Norman, a self-described "jack of all trades" was never out of work. He was very proud to work on the Avro Arrow project for three years. They made spontaneous road trips in Norman's beloved Austin Healey, plus travelled extensively in Scotland, England, Canada and the US, visiting family and friends. Next stop was Santa Monica California where Norman continued using his engineering genius at a large computer company called Data Products, building some of the first printers in the computer industry. Finally, in 1979, Norman and Chris retired to Nanaimo, eventually occupying their last home together at the Village on the Green townhouse complex. Norman loved taking long evening walks on his "golf course estate" and he had a passion for tinkering in his garage fixing things, surfing the Internet, and making music with friends on his organ, keyboard, drums and guitar. After Chris passed away in April 1999, Norman relied on music and his many friendships to fill the void with joy and comfort.

Well into his 80s and to the end, Norman practiced the guitar almost daily, and loved to visit Nanaimo music stores to browse the latest guitars and 'talk shop' with staff. After his 91st birthday, Norman bought himself a snare drum, and spent many hours 'rat-a-tat-tatting' and practicing skills he had learned in pipe band as a nine-year-old boy. A special friendship developed with international jazz guitarist Martin Taylor, who refers to him as 'Uncle Norman' and many trips were made to see Martin play across the globe.

Norman was funny, fiercely independent, frugal, curious, intelligent, and a master story teller and connector of people. He will be greatly missed and always remembered with love, laughter and joy by his cousin Audrey Piper of Coquitlam, nieces and nephews in Scotland and Alberta; adopted 'family' including Pat and Steve Cowie, Mona Arnone and Marilyn Assaf, all of Nanaimo, and Martin & Liz Taylor of Scotland, and James & Alison Taylor of London, god-son Allan MacDonald of Connecticut, lifelong friend Lewis MacDonald of Tuscon, Arizona, plus many other friends and neighbours.

A celebration of Norman's life will be held at the Village on the Green Clubhouse, on Saturday, January 30, 2016, at 1 pm. (2740 Keighley Road, Nanaimo). Flowers gratefully declined. For those so desiring, donations can be made in kind to any of his favorite charities: Nanaimo Hospice, the Palliative Care Ward (NRGH), NRGH Women's Auxiliary or the Salvation Army.

His friends would like to extend special thanks to Dr. Kingsley and his staff, Dr. Booth, the outstanding medical team at NRGH, especially in the palliative care ward and Emergency department, and to Nanaimo Hospice volunteers. As Norman often said, you are all angels. Friends who wish to attend Norman's celebration of life are kindly asked to RSVP to wrtstuff@shaw.ca before January 28.

<https://www.nanaimobulletin.com/obituaries/norman-mcmillan-1012511>

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/en-ca/obituaries/nanaimo-bc/norman-mcmillan-6624028>

Photo:

obituary & artist website:

<https://my.artistworks.com//blog/norman-mcmillan-1922-2015>

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