

DR. WILLIAM (BILL) JOHN SIBBALD

1946 - 2006

Dr. William (Bill) John Sibbald was a proud Guelph CVI graduate whose legacy as a dynamic and respected clinician is remembered internationally. During his high school years from 1959 to 1964, Sibbald was a CWOSSA badminton champion; his 1964 yearbook says, "Bill has played on both the football and basketball teams. He has also been active in Gaels' Club. Next year -- Pre-med at Western. We know he's headed for success." Bill *was* headed for success. He graduated from medical school at the University of Western Ontario in 1970. He then completed his residency in internal medicine at London's Victoria Hospital in 1974, followed by a two-year Fellowship in Critical Care at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit.

Sibbald aimed for excellence in all areas of his life, from his achievements in Intensive Care treatment in Ontario to coaching his sons in hockey. He was a proud father, a physician, a teacher, a researcher, and a leader. As one of Canada's first experts in Critical Care, he was the head of the Intensive Care department at Victoria Hospital following his studies. He transformed this unit into Southwestern Ontario's primary trauma centre, drawing Resident Fellows-in-Training from around the world. His contributions to research regarding cardiovascular function, medical informatics, ethical issues in the Intensive Care unit, and the applications of computers in the medical field were key to improving treatment.

Notably, his use of an armed forces pressure suit to control a patient's bleeding made the news in 1976. The next year, he presented a paper at a medical conference in France, suggesting that the practice of lowering the head of a critically ill shock victim may detrimentally affect the patient. Sibbald's innovative ideas, combined with his people skills, made a difference in the lives of many patients. During the SARS epidemic in 2003, he was Physician-In-Chief of two Toronto hospitals, where he persevered even after he injured his back and other staff members began to fall ill. Sibbald was thus one of the members of Ontario's Critical Care Steering Committee set up after the epidemic.

Throughout his career, Sibbald delivered more than 560 lectures in 16 countries and wrote over 250 peer-reviewed publications, 70 book chapters, and nine major textbooks. He won numerous awards, including the Society of Critical Care Medicine's Distinguished Service Award in 2004.

In both his medical and personal life, Sibbald was a kind and compassionate man, often starting work before dawn so that he would have time to spend with his family: his wife Connie and his five children.

In November 2004, Bill was diagnosed with colon cancer. He continued working as Sunnybrook's Chief of Medicine until days before his death. Doctor William John Sibbald was just 60 years old when he passed away on September 14, 2006. Globe & Mail columnist Doug McArthur wrote, Bill Sibbald "inspired a new generation of critical-care professionals;" he left us with the memory of an incredible caring gentleman who was a true friend to all.

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