

**SNELL, Dr. Bernard  
OC MD FRCP (Ed) DPH FACHA**

Dr. Bernard Snell died peacefully at home in his sleep in his 85th year on Tuesday, April 13, 2004.

Beloved husband of Edna (nee Altaras) for 54 years, and much loved father of Linda and Lauren, he is lovingly remembered by his nephews, nieces and their families. Victor Snell, David, Bernard and Lorraine Sufrin and Anthony, Caroline and Louise Snell; by his sisters-in-law, Iris Sufrin and Brenda Snell; and by his many dear friends and colleagues. He was predeceased by his two brothers, Manny and Monty.

Born in Glasgow, Scotland August 1, 1919, he was educated at the University of Edinburgh. He served as a Senior Surgeon in the British Merchant Service 1944-46 and Squadron Leader RCAF Auxiliary (Medical Service) 1959-65.

He was a distinguished member of the medical profession. He worked as a physician in Hove and Sheffield, England, before emigrating to Canada in 1957 to become the Assistant Medical Superintendent of the University of Alberta Hospital. He served as President of the University of Alberta Hospitals from 1966 until his retirement in 1984, where he dreamed of building a world-class teaching hospital in Edmonton and was instrumental in realizing that dream with the construction of the Walter Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre. This Centre continues to be a world leader in medical care and health scholarship.

He was a Clinical Professor in the Department of Health Administration at the University of Alberta where he inspired students and colleagues.

He not only gave selflessly to the medical community but to the community at large: serving on the boards of the United Way, the Edmonton Art Gallery and the Alberta Rhodes Selection Committee, amongst others.

His many honours include the Order of Canada, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, the Alberta Order of Excellence and an honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Alberta.

Bernard will be remembered for his sense of humour, quick intelligence and engaging and lively mind. He had a love of language, read avidly and enjoyed debate and discussion. He was a kind, caring and loyal husband, father and friend.

Special thanks to his caregivers, Purita Santiago and Eugenia Acevedo, for their outstanding care and support.

The funeral will be held at 2:00 p.m. Thursday, April 15, 2004 at the Chevra Kadisha Chapel at 12313 - 105 Avenue, Edmonton. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to The University of Alberta Hospital Foundation, The Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation, or The Kidney Foundation of Canada.

DR. BERNARD SNELL, 1919-2004

# University Hospital's driving force remembered for devotion

JASON MARKUSOFF  
Journal Staff Writer  
EDMONTON

Dr. Bernard Snell, the health administrator who led the University of Alberta's teaching hospital from concept to world-class facility, died Tuesday.

He was 84.

His friends and relatives say Dr. Snell was also a passionate patron of the arts and involved in nearly every facet of the community, but as president of the University Hospital for nearly two decades, his true dedication was towards ensuring his hospital offered the best possible services to patients.

That devotion helped make possible Walter Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre, one of Western Canada's jewels of medical education.

"I think he recognized that part of providing the best health care was being able to teach medical professionals how to do it," his youngest daughter, Lauren, said Wednesday.

In 1982, the first phase of his dream facility was completed. One of the largest lecture theatres was named Bernard Snell Hall in his honour.

Dr. Snell was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1919, the second of three boys in his family.

His father, a businessman, moved the family to New York in the mid-'20s, only to return to Scotland after the Great Depression. Despite those hard years, Dr. Snell's parents retained big dreams for his brothers and him.

"His mother said, 'You're all going to be doctors, and by golly, they were,'" Lauren said.

He studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh, then served with Britain's Merchant Marines during the Second World War, as a medical officer throughout Asia.

After the war, he returned to England and set up a practice as a specialist in infectious diseases, but within years decided to make an unlikely career switch to hospital administration.

"He was looking around and saying that they beat smallpox, tuberculosis was going down, they're beating polio, there's antibiotics ... it was a dwindling field," Lauren said.

In 1957, he passed over job offers in Australia and Ireland to become deputy medical superintendent of the University Hospital, so he could be closer to his older brother in Winnipeg.

He came to the city just as northern Alberta was beginning to boom.

Longtime friend Annabel Berretti said there were few decent restaurants at the time, so couples would meet at dinner parties, where the sociable and devilishly funny Dr. Snell would meet several lifelong friends.



SUPPLIED

Dr. Bernard Snell

He rose quickly within hospital administration, to become its first president in 1966.

"He could see the potential of the city," recalled his eldest daughter, Linda, who practises medicine in Montreal.

Dr. Snell started pushing for the construction of a state-of-the-art teaching hospital shortly after he became president. He spent nearly a decade lobbying then-premier Peter Lougheed for the money, luckily during an era of more robust spending.

"We are building a facility which will enable us to care for some of the most complicated health problems in Canada," Dr. Snell said at the time.

Following his presidency, he served as a consultant on a range of national and international health issues, sitting on many task forces and committees. Those years were marked by some of the first pushes towards private health-care services in Canada, but Dr. Snell believed firmly in the social system, Lauren recalled.

Dr. Snell was also an instrumental figure in helping set up the Stollery Children's Hospital. He served on boards for the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and Edmonton Art Gallery.

Among a list of several decorations, he was appointed to the Order of Canada in 1996.

The funeral for Dr. Snell will be held today at 2 p.m., at the Chevra Kadisha Chapel, 12313 105th Ave.

[jmarkusoff@thejournal.canwest.com](mailto:jmarkusoff@thejournal.canwest.com)