



WILLSON ALEXANDER MCTAVISH
L.L.B., Q.C., L.S.M.

Peacefully in his sleep on June 7, 2022 in his 85th year after several years of declining health. Predeceased by his wife Patricia (née Carter-Coulton). Predeceased by his devoted wife Betty (née Muir) (2012). Willson is survived by his loving partner Laurie Pallett. Admired by Betty's son Steve Horsley (Penny Hogan). Cherished by 'Daughter-in-Love' Dawn Henry. Much loved 'Pa' of Doug Horsley (Teresa), Barb Pickett (Shannon) and Rhea Horsley. Great-grand 'Pa' of Willson, Layton and Norah Horsley and Macy and Elias Pickett, all of Alberta. Sadly missed by Laurie's children, Kalin Pallett (Krista Mroz) of Whitehorse and Sarah Pallett (Joe Churchill) and their children Matthew and Adelaide of Los Angeles. Beloved son of the late Margaret (née Whitehead) and the late Dr. Willson McTavish. Brother of the late Daniel McTavish (2014). Survived by his stepmother Leila McTavish, half-brother John McTavish and his daughter Jane Margarita, half-sister Christina McTavish (John Bescec) and their children, James and Tiffany. Willson was affectionately called "Willy" by some family and friends.

Born in Toronto on December 22, 1937, Willson attended Upper Canada College (1956), Trinity College, University of Toronto (1959) and Osgoode Hall Law School (1962). He was called to the Bar in 1964 and joined the firm Harries Houser, where Betty Horsley worked. As the story goes, Willson phoned Betty to ask her for a date and she accidentally disconnected him. He must have redialed because they were married in 1979 by his dear friend 'Hutch' (The Reverend Andrew Hutchison, an Anglican priest and later Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada). They lived first in Cooksville and then settled in Port Credit. Willson had hung out his shingle along with Bryan Coleman in 1974. In 1979, Coleman McTavish joined another firm to become Keyser, Mason, Ball, Coleman, McTavish and Lewis. In November 1979 a CP train derailed and exploded necessitating the evacuation of more than 200,000 citizens. Willson served long hours as Associate Counsel for the Mississauga Railway Accident Inquiry led by The Honourable Mr. Justice Samuel Grange from 1979-80. Willson was President of the Peel Law Association and founding Chair of Ontario's County and District Law Presidents Association from 1980-82. Other career related activities included serving as a CBAO member on committees about Court Reform, Legal Aid, Cooperative Education and Insurance Reform.

In 1984, Willson made the life altering decision to leave private practice and became The Official Guardian for the Province of Ontario. The challenge that he embraced was to protect the rights of those who could not protect themselves. This position transitioned in 1995 to that of The Children's Lawyer and he continued in that role until his retirement in 2002. It was in this capacity that he traveled throughout Canada, USA, England, Australia and Singapore to learn and deliver papers about *guardian ad litem* for vulnerable minor children and incapable adults. His service was recognized with the Law Society Medal in 1993 and the Amethyst Award in 2001.

Willson served his community as president of his ratepayers' association, a director of Peel Cheshire Home for brain injured adults, a volunteer at Interim Place (for abused women) and president of the Mississauga Symphony. As the founding chair of the Mississauga Arts Council (MAC) during the 1980's, Willson was concerned by the lack of facilities for the arts in Mississauga. He and MAC encouraged the establishment of the Meadowvale Theatre in 1989. Perhaps his proudest community contribution was as visionary for The Living Arts Centre (LAC). Willson imagined more than a performance hall. He dreamt of a centre where all arts could be celebrated with classrooms, galleries and studio space for the visual and performing arts. The task included bringing politicians and city staff on board, fundraising, securing land and commissioning architectural renderings. The Living Arts Centre opened in 1997. Willson proudly wore his monogrammed football style LAC jacket wherever he went. His efforts were recognized when he received the Mississauga Legends Row Award in 2017.

Throughout his life Willson demonstrated a strong love of the arts - be it pencil drawings while a student at UCC, participation in school plays, architectural sketches of the so-called 'cow gates' while a student at Osgoode or ink outlines of the woods behind his home. He painstakingly painted aboriginal inspired images of animals onto paddles and cut intricate layers of paper into frameable art and handmade cards. He collected duck decoy carvings, Haida style masks and amassed an impressive library of art books. He enjoyed reciting Shakespearean sonnets and delighted in singing verses of Gilbert and Sullivan. He even sang along from his theatre seat to the consternation of theatre ushers. Wherever he went his comings and goings could be tracked by his constant whistling and warbling noises. He was a hero to the children on his street who will remember the sounds from the pitch black ravine as he lit the fireworks placing himself and others in peril.

In retirement, Willson served on the Criminal Injuries Board and stoically faced more surgeries for cancer and cardiac challenges. His passion project was his self-published novel, 'a mytho-poetic memoir' *The Queen Devil's Quilt*, (far too convoluted and cerebral for those of us close to him to understand). He read widely and wrote letters to lawmakers and editors. He was a loyal sports fan who closely followed his Jays, Leafs, Argos and Raptors. Following Betty's death, Willson partnered with Laurie. Their paths had crossed decades earlier through the arts and the two couples had socialized over the years. He and Laurie lived in Lorne Park and Willson embraced Laurie's social circle including her long time friends at Applewood United Church. The two of them traveled to Bermuda, Germany, California, B.C. and the Yukon. They enjoyed cruises to Scotland and Iceland, Norway and the Baltic region, Italy (to experience Verdi's Nabucco in a Roman Colosseum) and The Netherlands to see the art of Rembrandt at the Rijksmuseum. As well, they gathered their families for trips to the Calgary Stampede and to Ottawa for the 150th Canada Day celebrations.

The family wishes to thank and acknowledge the doctors and staff members at Trillium and Credit Valley Hospitals who cared for and helped Willson prior to and during the Covid-19 crisis as well as those affiliated with Parkland on the Glen, LHIN, Bayshore and Home Instead. Cremation has taken place. Visitation at Turner & Porter "Peel" Chapel, 2180 Hurontario Street, Mississauga on Monday, August 8, 2022 from 2-4 and 7-9 p.m. A Celebration of Willson's life will be held at Turner & Porter "Peel" Chapel on Tuesday, August 9, 2022 at 3 p.m. Reception to follow. There will be a private family Inurnment of remains at Springcreek Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that those wishing to honour Willson's memory donate to the Canadian Cancer Society or the Mississauga Arts Council. In the spirit of emerging from this Covid pandemic please consider honouring Willson's love of the arts by purchasing tickets and attending an event at The Living Arts Centre, The McMichael Art Gallery, The Stratford or Shaw Festivals.

Turner & Porter