



REMEMBERING
Garry Edmund Vallance

August 28, 1930 - January 29, 2025



Garry Edmund Vallance was born August 28, 1930 in Calgary, Alberta. He was one of three children, with an older brother Blaine (1927-2011) and a younger sister Norma (1934-2019).

Garry's father, James (Jim) Dunlop Vallance was born in Hamilton, Scotland. The family emigrated to Canada in 1904 when Jim was an infant.

Garry's grandfather had been a coal miner in Scotland. He was lured to Canada to manage a mine in Springhill, Nova Scotia. The family later moved to Kindersley, Saskatchewan, where another coal mine needed managing.

Garry's mother, Elizabeth (Lil) Black, was born in 1903 in Coleraine, Ireland, one of nine children (eight survived). Her father managed a pub in New Market Street, and the family lived in rooms above. Lil's father emigrated to Canada in 1906. The rest of the family followed in 1913, when Lil was 10 years old. They settled near Kindersley, working the land as farmers.

Jim and Lil were married on December 25, 1925 in a farmhouse living room in Kindersley. Blaine was born two years later in Drumheller, followed by Garry in 1930 and Norma in 1934, both born in Calgary.

By the 1940s the family had relocated to Chilliwack, where Garry's father was

employed as an artist and engraver for the local newspaper. Garry attended Chilliwack Secondary School, accepting entry-level employment as a clerk with the Royal Bank upon graduation. That's where he met Mary (Polly) Maxine Skrine.

Garry and Polly were married on March 10, 1951 at Cooke's Presbyterian Church in Chilliwack. Son James (Jim) was born in 1952 and daughter Patricia (Pat) followed in 1955.

Thus began a nomadic lifestyle, with each Royal Bank promotion requiring that the family move to a new town. Chilliwack, Vancouver, Abbotsford, North Vancouver, Kamloops, Vanderhoof, Terrace, Cranbrook, Langley, and finally back to Vancouver, by which time Garry was a top-tier executive at the bank's head office in the RBC tower at Georgia and Burrard.

When he was a branch manager in those small towns, property developers would come to Garry's office, borrow a substantial amount, complete their project, re-pay the loan, and pocket the profits. At some point Garry must have thought, gosh, I could do that!

A skilled handyman himself (carpentry, plumbing, electricity) at age 55 Garry took early retirement from the bank and embarked on a second career as a property developer, building condominiums in the Lower Mainland. Garry would oversee the construction, while Polly managed the accounting. Together they traveled the world, spending winters at their second home in Mesa, Arizona.

After 62 years of marriage Polly passed away in 2013. Garry continued living in their Abbotsford condominium, with frequent visits to Mesa where he had many friends. He later moved to an assisted living facility, and then, when mobility became a challenge, he took up residence at The Oxford Senior Care home in Abbotsford. That's where he spent his remaining years, doted upon and adored by the nursing staff, with daily visits from daughter Pat.

Garry passed away peacefully on January 29, 2025 having lived a full and happy 94 years.

