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KGH remembers two of its pioneers

By Sharon Partridge

Kingston General Hospital mourns the recent loss of two prominent figures in its history. Life Governor John J. MacKay and Honorary Medical Staff Member Dr. Peter Morrin, both of whom recently passed away, are being fondly remembered as hospital pioneers and respected members of the community.

President of a manufacturing company, John MacKay began his involvement with KGH as a governor in 1962. He served as vice-president of the Board of Governors before being appointed president in 1969. During his leadership, John was instrumental in creating a partnership between Kingston's hospitals and Queen's University to share resources and eliminate duplication of services. Even though he retired from the Board of Governors in 1971, his interest in the hospital continued and he served as one of the original members of the Founder's Advisory Council of the KGH Foundation in 1979. In 2000, KGH recognized John's extraordinary contributions to the hospital by appointing him a Life Governor. John passed away on Sept. 20 following a heart attack. He was 79.

President and Chief Executive Officer Joe de Mora remembers John as a good friend and neighbour. He describes John and his wife, Patricia, as a delightful couple who were active members in their Howe Island community. "Although John had long retired when we met, he always remained interested in the hospital and the community," says Joe.

John was an avid sailor and a seasoned traveler and Joe recalls admiring paintings depicting John's various destinations during visits to his home. "He was quite an accomplished painter."

Joe says he will remember John for his intellect

and warm personality. "He always had a smile on his face. He will be missed."

John has survived by his wife, Patricia, three children, Gillian, Shane and Ann, and eight grandchildren.

Irish born Dr. Peter Morrin came to Kingston in 1961 as a fully trained specialist in internal medicine,



Dr. Peter Morrin

with a keen interest in patients, fluids, electrolytes, acid and base – the foundations of the specialty later known as nephrology. A pioneer in the process of dialysis, he conducted several innovative procedures for patients with renal failure, most notably the construction of a dialysis machine from spare parts with the assistance of engineer and colleague Fred Siemenson. "Back in the early days of dialysis the machines were not readily available,"

says Dr. Ted Toffelmire, medical director of the renal unit. "You had to put together the equipment you needed."

Peter's work at KGH led to the founding of the renal unit and the division of nephrology. As chair of nephrology he established a talented and dedicated staff. "This is a division that now consists of eight nephrologists and a program that provides care to more than 350 patients receiving dialysis," says Dr. Ross Morton, nephrologist and internal medicine physician.

Always concerned with what was best for the patient, Peter spent some time late in his career studying ethics and developing a medical ethics curriculum at Queen's University. "Peter was

a skilled clinician and diagnostician, a respected teacher, an insightful ethicist and a wonderful friend and mentor," says Ross

Ted notes that in addition to his accomplishments in medical innovation and providing excel-



John J. MacKay

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lent patient care, he will never forget Peter's wit and sense of humour. "He had a dry, Irish tone of delivery that he added to even his most stately comments. This charm remained with him until his last moments."

Peter's son, Hugh Morrin, says his father was "an Irishman with a twinkle in his eye. My father had a wonderful sense of humour. He was fabulous storyteller to us as children, and later, to his grandchildren."

After retiring in 1995, Peter was able to return to his childhood passion of fly-fishing, even serving as president of the local club.

"My father led a full and vibrant

life outside of work; he always enjoyed outdoor activities with his family and retirement allowed him to pursue them more often," says Hugh recalling past family outings of sailing in the summer and skiing in the winter. He passed on his love of sailing to all three of his sons, and in retirement, he and his wife, Mariella, would often go sailing for months at a time. Last December, Peter took a course to become a ski instructor. "He may have been the oldest person to take that course," says Hugh, with a smile.

In 1999, Peter was appointed to the Honorary Medical Staff at KGH.

Peter passed away Oct. 3, from injuries sustained in an automobile accident. He was 75. The whole Morrin family, who were

by his side throughout his final days, were impressed with the quality and compassion of the care he received.

"We are especially grateful to Dr. Ellis, who led the care team and kept in constant communication with us, and to Lloyd Wharton, the ICU nurse with whom my father spent much of his last few days."

Hugh has begun an online memorial dedicated to his father at www.magma.ca/~morrin/. It continues to grow as Hugh adds more memorabilia and he invites people to visit often.

Peter is survived by his wife, Mariella, sons Peter, Hugh and Robin, six grandchildren, sister Alice (Smyth) and brother Francis. ■