



## Mr. Joseph "Pat" Graham

May 6, 1937 - February 14, 2017

Second Service Announcement for Mr. Joseph Graham of High River, Alberta passed away peacefully at the Vulcan Extendicare on February 14th, 2017 at the age of 79 years. Joseph is survived by his loving wife Ruthella; children Colleen (Nick) Lafleur of Sooke, BC, Christine Shade of Victoria, BC, Roger Graham of Calgary, AB, Kipling (Louise) Cooper of Nepean, ON, Kristl Costain of Calgary, AB; grandchildren Shane, Dylan, Mirren, Ian, Evan, Allison, Mary, Jessica, Kathryn, Noah and Rachel; brothers Campbell (Nancy) Graham of Bangor, N. Ireland, Paul (Becky) Graham of Calgary, AB and sister Bea (Allan) Crance of Calgary, AB as well as numerous nieces, nephews and cousins. Joseph was predeceased by his parents Ernie and May Graham; brother Ernie Graham, nephew Karl Graham and his first wife Marilyn Graham.

Joseph Graham was born in Belfast Northern Ireland where he lived, and survived the many sights, sounds and results of WW2, which no doubt contributed to his love for all things military. After finishing his schooling he began an Apprenticeship in Carpentry, (which he completed in Canada), until emigrating in 1955 with his parents and 2 younger siblings to Canada landing in Calgary. He joined the Canadian Navy and serving 1956 - 61 while based in Esquimalt BC. Because of his Irish heritage, he was called Paddy or Pat, a nickname which followed throughout his career in the Navy and the Fire Service. Following his discharge he joined the Victoria Fire Department first as an investigator, gaining expert witness status in Arson Investigation, then promoted to Deputy Chief (1980). It was at this time he met and married his loving wife, Ruthella (Donnelly/Cooper) who has been blessed to share his dreams and schemes, his tender concern for those who are in pain and struggling and those who want to learn. During all his working life he continued to learn through courses, classes, experiential training in larger Fire Departments and extensive reading. He became a Mason with membership in Goldstream Lodge 161 which he maintained until the time of his death. Joseph retired in 1987 and moved with Ruthella to build a farm in the foothills of Alberta near Cochrane. A quarter section of bare native sod became his dream building site where he exercised his ingenuity, skill, and love of hard work to the limits. Horses, sheep, cats, dogs, chickens etc. all found a home on Hawk's Hill Farm. It only took 6 months for him to miss the

challenge and rewards of the fire service and he returned to work as Chief of Rockyview County. Developing links, inspiring young men and women, convincing local governments and other fire departments of the necessity and the rewards of cooperation, professionalism and investment in fire protection as well as suppression were his strengths. AFCA, Fire Etc. all benefited from his insight and leadership. Following retirement from Rockyview in 2001 he immediately was requested by Department Municipal Affairs to review and advise regarding the Office of the Fire Commissioner. He produced a study report and recommendations in 3 months and ultimately became Fire Commissioner 2001 -2006, his dream job. He continued to do contract work until 2009 when he experienced his first illness. The farm was sold and he moved with Ruthella to 'REALLY RETIRE" in High River. The welcoming community and new friends along with his life time Faith and family have sustained him as the rare disease PSP (Progressive Supranuclear Palsy) gradually increased his limitations and ultimately led to his death.

Pat was instrumental in building the OFC as it exists today. He was a champion of the Alberta Fire Service and the creator of the Alberta Emergency Services Medal program. Over 7900 of those medals have now been awarded. He also initiated the Fire Service Advisory Committee allowing fire service representatives direct access to his office and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. His efforts continue to guide the fire service and he will always be remembered as one of our great Fire Commissioners.

Joseph was devoted to his children and proud of their achievements. He was a supportive Scout Leader, loved Scottish Dancing Classes, making toys, boats and planes, playing soccer and fixing anything made of wood. He enjoyed music, sang in church choir, loved the bagpipes trail riding on horseback and valued education for himself and others. An avid outdoorsman who loved hiking, mountain climbing, canoeing, jogging and marathon running winning a silver medal for second in class (over 50) at the World Police/Fire Games held in Calgary.

A caring heart sensed those who were struggling or hurting and would come along side or recruit others to assist. (Started Critical Stress debriefing with his teams before it was in vogue). A loving husband who demonstrated caring in everything he did. Enjoyed trips to the UK, tracking down epitaphs of distant relatives and revisiting special places he knew as a boy.

His wife, 5 adult children and 11 grandchildren along with those we call "our kids" and their kids that called him Uncle Joe or Grandpa or 'Dad' or friend are profoundly grateful for the years we had to share his big heart, wisdom, work ethic and gentle spirit.

Grateful thanks to the many Doctors and Health Care workers who shared these past 6 years with us. Especially Dr. James Silvius; staff in High River Hospital Emergency, and Unit 300; Janet McKirby private caregiver for the past 2 years and the wonderful caring, competence of all at Extendicare Vulcan who provided a haven for both of us during his last month on this earth.

Joseph spent 34 years in Fire Service as the Alberta Fire Commissioner (Ret. 2007), Fire Chief Rockyview County, deputy Fire Chief Victoria, B.C. and as an investigator. Joseph was the recipient of 6 medals: Peace Keeping Medal, Queens Jubilee Medal, Alberta Exemplary Service medal and bar, B.C. Exemplary Service, Alberta Centennial Medal and the Emergency Services Alberta medal. He was a member of the Goldstream Masonic Lodge 161 since 1972, a Life member since 2002 of the Alberta Fire Chief's Association, Calgary Naval Veteran's Association-Corvette Club and the Naval Museum (Military Museums) Society.

A Celebration of Joseph's Life was held on Thursday, February 23rd at 11:00 a.m. at the High River Christian Reformed Church. Caring for the family is Lyle Reeves Funerals of High River (403.652.4242).

# Events

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**FEB**   **Celebration of Life Service**                      11:00AM

**23**

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High River Christian Reformed Church

450 Macleod Trail SW, High River, AB, CA, T1V 1B5

# Comments

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“ My thoughts and respects go to Pat's family. Pat was in the OFC when I first worked with him. He represented the industry very well. I am proud to say I had the opportunity to know such a great man. He left too soon. The Fire service has lost a true leader.

Jason Dubé

Jason Dubé - June 16, 2017 at 02:16 PM

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“ Dear Ruthella. We were so saddened to read of Joe's passing upon our return from Vancouver Island. We have so many fond memories of times at the farm with both of you, concerts and church functions. You were both a wonderful influence on our children which has helped to shape them into the people that they are today. Thank you.

May God draw near to you and your family during this very sad time, and give the comfort that only He can give. We send you our love,

Richard and Vicky Savage; Ryan and Polly; Breanne, Joel, Piper, Bentley and Sawyer;

Gavin, Katherine and Thorin

Vicky Savage - March 18, 2017 at 03:29 PM

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“ Ruthella

So sorry to hear of Joe's passing - just saw it in the Cochrane paper! Our sincere condolences. Our thoughts are with you at this time.

John & Lynn Thomson

John Thomson - March 01, 2017 at 02:03 PM

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“ Deepest Sympathy to you and your family.Saw the obituary in the Edmonton Journal.

Remember with fondess, our friendship with both of you so many years ago.

May the Lord give you courage, strength and wisdom at this time.

Dave & Sharon McGraw

Sharon McGraw - February 26, 2017 at 07:06 PM



“ Ruthella,

We are so sorry for your loss and pray God's continued blessing and compassion upon you and your family.

Our family has been touched by the both of you and we have often spoke of the many good times we shared. Your love, kindness and friendship is cherished. We have so many memories of being at Hawk Hills to enjoy your hospitality. Wonderful times for sure.

Joe certainly left his mark and legacy and we certainly appreciate his kindness, his wisdom and encouragement he shared with us and for that we are eternally grateful. He had a particular significant influence on Luke. Luke has longed dreamed of being a firefighter and with his own determination and support of many he completed his Fire Training at Vermillion and has now served at Redwood Meadows Fire Service and currently at Cremona Fire Services as a Firefighter. He speaks often of the encouragement and support "Uncle Joe" gave him from when he was just a wee lad right through to adulthood.

We send you and your family our love. May God bless you with the fullness of His compassion and Love.

Brenda & Glen, Luke and Rachel, Karl, Lindsey, Olivia and Charlie, Tom, Kelly, Teagen and Kian Sine

**Glen Sine** - February 24, 2017 at 04:37 PM

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“ 1 file added to the album New Album Name



**Christine Shade** - February 17, 2017 at 06:15 PM

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“ It is unfortunate that the service for our Father was arranged with no consideration for his biological children and grandchildren. It is also saddening that we weren't informed that the service would be held today, we found out after reading this obituary.

On behalf of Colleen, Christine, Roger, Ian, Shane, Dylan, Evan, Allison and Mirren, know that our dad/ grandpa was and will continue to be loved. May you rest in Peace.

**Christine Shade** - February 17, 2017 at 12:46 PM

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“ Christine and family, sending our condolences and love to you. May your Dad rest in peace. Know he watches over his children and grandchildren from above. Your memories and love for him can never be taken from you. Sending you a hug and our deepest sympathy on your loss.

Pat Barbon and family

Victoria B.C.

**Patricia Barbon** - February 18, 2017 at 06:39 AM

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“ We would like to pass along condolences to Ruthella and the family of Joseph. He will be fondly remembered by many.

Donna & Debbie

**First Class Tax** - February 16, 2017 at 07:16 PM

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“ Our deepest condolences to the Graham family. Pat was a great leader in the Fire Service and will be missed by his Fire Family.

Sincere Sympathy

Fire Chief Len Zebedee and Pat Zebedee



**Pat Zebedee** - February 16, 2017 at 05:33 PM

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“ My sincere condolences to you and your family. It was a pleasure getting to know Joseph in the ADP. He had such a great sense of humor. He was such an asset to our program. May you find comfort in the memories you've made/shared together.

Debbie Remple

Debbie Remple - February 16, 2017 at 05:07 PM

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“ Ruth - We are all sending our heartfelt sympathies. We enjoyed having Joe in our office. We hope the special memories of your life together will give you comfort in the days ahead. You are in our thoughts and prayers. The staff at Highwood Dental.

Highwood Dental - February 16, 2017 at 04:20 PM

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“ Sending our sincere condolences on the loss of your beloved Joseph. You are in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Keri & Dr. Silvus



Keri Walker - February 16, 2017 at 12:34 PM