



## REMEMBERING

# Terrence Swanson (Terry)

April 5, 1930 - March 16, 2026



Terrence "Terry" Swanson - a lifelong builder, adventurer, and devoted husband - passed away peacefully at the age of 95 just weeks away from 96. Born on April 5th in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Terry lived a life shaped by curiosity, courage, craftsmanship, and enduring love.

Growing up in the 1940s, Terry developed a deep passion for sports, especially hockey and football, during an era when grit mattered far more than protective equipment. Injuries were simply part of the game, and Terry played fearlessly. Newspaper accounts once described him ripping through the line for a touchdown, earning him the nickname "RIP", a title bestowed by friends that perfectly captured his determination and competitive spirit.

At just 16, Terry discovered what would become a lifelong passion: designing and building model airplanes entirely from scratch. An active member of radio-controlled (RC) aircraft clubs in Canada and Maui, he continued to design, draft and build remarkably detailed aircraft well into his 90s. Countless hours at a drafting table produced dozens upon dozens of custom models - each reflecting technical mastery, patience, creativity, and the simple joy of the build, often accompanied by opera playing in the background. If materials were scarce, Terry made do with scraps, which somehow still turned into something beautiful. The planes flew splendidly - though depending on who was at the controls, they occasionally enjoyed some truly magnificent crashes.

Terry once believed he would never marry - until a blind date changed everything. He met the love of his life, Lily "Lilian", and together they built a partnership grounded in respect, humour, and devotion. Married for 58 years, Lily was the steady centre of Terry's life and his companion in most of his greatest adventures.

After a long and accomplished career- working for many years at Crowther Mackay & Partners and later spending the final 13 years of his career with Fluor Canada Engineering before retiring in 1987 - Terry, an HVAC designer, and Lily choose to retire in their 50s and move from Calgary to Vancouver Island, fulfilling a shared dream.

There, they designed and built their custom home together, creating a place that reflected Terry's craftsmanship and Lily's warmth. Their home - filled with ingenuity, care, and Lily's much-loved Jamaican and Chinese cuisines (many not found on any restaurant menu) - became a cherished gathering place for out-of-town family and friends.

Adventure ran deep in Terry's roots. His father immigrated from England, and his mother from Russia (now Ukraine), instilling in him a love of travel and exploration. At 21, Terry spent a remarkable year travelling throughout Europe with his school friend, known as "Loose Lefty." They stayed in youth hostels, worked along the way, and lived with people they met during their journey - stories Terry delighted in retelling throughout his life.

Terry also served his country with pride as a member of the South Alberta Light Horse Regiment, and later the King's Own Calgary Regiment, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant. In recognition of his service, he was later granted the honorary rank of Captain.

A lover of theatre, plays, and opera, Terry appreciated both grandeur and detail. He held a lifelong affection for the Canadian Rockies and spent many years as a mountaineer and skier, pursuits he enjoyed, and continued with Lily. Over time, the toll of contact sports and mountain accidents led to numerous surgeries. With hard-earned wisdom, Terry often cautioned his nephew to avoid contact sports, knowing firsthand how youthful injuries can catch up later in life.

Terry will be remembered for his ingenuity, adventurous spirit, gentle humour, and the remarkable life he built alongside Lily.

He is survived by his beloved wife Lily, and by his two nephews John and David and grandnieces Amy (husband Matt), Carly, Adara, and friends who will forever cherish his memory.

A note of thanks for the wonderful care he received at the Cowichan Hospital in Duncan.

