

## Christopher David Webster (K50-53)

The following obituary was published by The Globe and Mail in British Columbia, from Mar. 2 to Mar. 6, 2024.

*Christopher David Webster died peacefully, at the age of 87, in Victoria, BC, on February 20, 2024. He leaves behind his wife, Dianne Macfarlane; his sons, Tim and Paul; daughter-in-law, Margaret (Tim); grandson, Michael; and granddaughter, Rosa. Chris was tragically predeceased by his grandson, Thomas Webster, in April of last year.*

*Chris and Dianne met while Chris was teaching at the U of T Centre of Criminology and Dianne was doing her MA. They moved to Vancouver, where each of them began new jobs and took the final plunge and married in November 1995. Chris leaves behind Dianne's daughters, Elizabeth (James) and Amy, who were proud to call him their semi-Dad; and Dianne's grandchildren, Jonah, Ethan, Thomas and Sarah, who called him Buddy and in so many wonderful ways he was their buddy. Also left behind are his sister, Marion Wilkinson of Chichester, UK; and her sons, Henry of Selsey, UK, William (Kelvina) of Newport, Wales; and daughter, Catherine (Billy) of Blockley, UK.*

*Chris was born in 1936 in Aylesbury, England, to Bernard and Violet Webster. He attended Framlingham College and later served in the Royal Signals as a Second Lieutenant. In 1957, he decamped to Vancouver, BC, joined the Royal Canadian Signals and achieved the rank of Lieutenant. A chance encounter with a British Army pal who had applied to UBC was the first time it even occurred to him to go to university. That began what was to become a long and illustrious academic career.*

*He met and married Margaret Simpson there, and they went on to produce Tim in 1960 and Paul in 1965. He obtained his MA in experimental psychology at Queen's in 1964 and his PhD at Dalhousie University in 1967, and the young family then moved to Toronto. His CV runs to 26 pages. His career's focus was criminology, and in particular, Violence Risk Assessment and the Management of Violence. He was instrumental in developing a risk assessment tool, HCR-20, the Historical-Clinical-Risk measuring instrument, that aids courts, parole boards, etc., in gauging the likelihood of recidivism in violent offenders. He was a prolific author of dozens of books, monographs and manuals relating to his profession. His last major literary effort was published in 2022: *Forensic Fables: What Literature Tells Us About Crime, Mental Disorder and Violence*, combining his two greatest interests.*

*Chris began his career in 1966 at the Addiction Research Foundation in Toronto. He then moved to the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry as a Research Coordinator at the Child and Family Studies Centre. In 1975, the family moved to Victoria and he filled the role of Research Coordinator in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. In 1977, he went back to Toronto for a position as Research Scientist at the Metropolitan Toronto Forensic Service at the Clarke Institute. In 1986, he became Head of the Department of Psychology at the Clarke followed by a stint as the Head of Impulsivity there.*



*In 1993, he was back to the west coast for a job as a professor within the Department of Psychology at Simon Fraser University. He also held the Chair of Psychology there. Chris also mentored countless graduate students who have gone on to be the next generation of leading researchers in this field. From 1999-2002, he was a Research Scientist at the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, and he filled the same role at St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton from 2004-2011. He was also a Psychologist Member of the Ontario Review Board from 2004-2022, and after moving to Victoria, a Public member of the British Columbia Review Board from 2018-2021. His contribution to these Boards – the mandate of these government appointed agencies is to make dispositions concerning accused persons who are deemed not criminally responsible by reason of a mental disorder or unfit to stand trial and was immense. His vast knowledge of risk assessment instruments informed both Boards in the review of their cases. He was a Fellow of the Canadian Psychological Association, the American Psychological Association, and the Royal Society of Canada.*

*Chris was a lot of fun to be around. His embellishments of his military career knew no bounds and his penchant for writing poetry of dubious quality was unmatched. In later years, he enjoyed writing small books about his family and other topics. About Crabs was his first effort at this hobby. It was a humorous look at Tim's career as a crab fisherman and the fishing business in general. His latest volume is called *The Young Man and the Sea*, and was cowritten with his grandson, Thomas, who was also a commercial fisherman. Tom's adventures at sea figure prominently. He once described *About Crabs* as a "national non-seller." His wit and humour were abundant. He enjoyed a good laugh at the absurdities of life and had a sense of self-deprecation that he passed on to others. He was frugal with money and notoriously couldn't resist free items left at the curb. He considered spending more than ten dollars on a bottle of wine to be extravagant. He enjoyed "fixing" things and then referring to the result as a "Webby Bodge".*

*Chris loved to travel. Dianne organized annual trips to the Gulf Coast of Florida. Chris and Dianne enjoyed their time in Tuscany where they attended two international forensic conferences. Chris had a visiting professorship at The University of Canterbury in NZ. The teaching was not onerous, so they had time to explore both the north and south islands. They had another memorable trip to Greece and ended up in beautiful Istanbul, Turkey. Another highlight was six weeks spent in China as guests of Dianne's sister, Kathleen, and brother-in-law, Glenn Christie. In 2015, Tim set off with Chris on a week-long journey through France and Belgium with Chris' nephews and Glenn Christie. The "War Trip" was dedicated to exploring the battlefields and memorials of the World Wars and culminated in finding his grandfather's name at the monument in Arras, France. In 2017, Tim joined him on a westward crossing of the Atlantic on *Queen Mary II*, terminating in NYC. He felt that he had cheated when he flew to Canada as young man and that a proper immigrant should arrive by ship. This trip somewhat atoned for that misdeed. We think he would have really preferred to have arrived on a troop carrier as a victorious returning soldier though. Chris moved to Victoria from Toronto in 2017 to be closer to his family and spent six enjoyable years of living downtown at the *Belvedere*, where he made many friends, helped set up a library and introduced a series of talks for the tenants. Last July, he moved to *Berwick House* retirement home and was in the process of making new friends there.*

*So many of us learned so much from Chris. He had a knack for engaging with all sorts of different people. The panhandler on the corner to prestigious university folks were all the same to him. He was genuinely interested in people and what makes them the way they are. We will all miss Chris' engaging spirit as well as his wit and charm. The man was a bright light and led the way for so many of us. He will*

*always be remembered for his generosity, warmth, kindness and sense of humour, and will be missed by all who knew him. A gathering to celebrate the life of Christopher Webster will be held at The Royal Canadian Legion, Queen's Own Rifles, 1395 Lake Shore Blvd., Toronto, Ontario, on Saturday, May 4, 2024, at 1.30 p.m. A second gathering will be organized for Chris' west coast friends and family in Victoria, BC, the details of which will be announced in due course. In lieu of flowers and in accordance with his wishes, donations to the Chris Webster Young Scholar Award from the International Association for Forensic Health Services or to the Child Development Institute will be gratefully appreciated. Alternatively, donations can be made to the S.A.L.T.S. foundation in Victoria. The foundation is involved with Sail and Life Training for youth and was a big part of his late grandson's upbringing. "I told you I was ill". - Spike Milligan*