

Richard Jull (Dick/Will)

February 24, 1931 - February 26, 2022

Will (Dick) Jull was a long time member of the Ramblers from 1977 to 2002. Some member tributes follow.

Will (Dick) Jull was on my very first hike with Ramblers. We went to Lake Minnewanka, something like 20+ km return. Dick stopped at the campsites to spend the night which horrified me - the idea of spending the night alone in this wilderness was beyond my comprehension. I was so impressed.

As years passed I came to know him as a soft-spoken, extremely knowledgeable person who loved the mountains. He gave us so much in the years he was with the Ramblers.

Dorothy-Ann Reimer

Memories of Dick Jull (1931-2022) by David Mulligan

It seems that I joined the Ramblers sometime in 1991. I probably met Dick Jull on a backpack organised by Alistair DesMoulins a year or so later. Dick loved to backpack and we often shared a tent while backpacking with Alistair and Gail DesMoulins. Most years during the 1990's Alistair organised a week-long backpack somewhere remote in Alberta and often Dick and I joined them. Dick always carried a large external frame pack and used an old ski pole for a walking stick.

Although we arranged ample group meals (you never starved on an Alistair trip), I do remember Dick having ample "emergency" rations which included the extra 1 lb of cheese mentioned elsewhere. Ramblers folk lore includes the tale of Alistair, Dick and Wally visiting an "all-you-can-eat" buffet after one trip and being asked/told not to come back again. Dick and Wally had even paid the discounted senior rate.

In the 1990's, Dick spent many winters away in Nepal and New Zealand. He talked passionately about Nepal, where he befriended a family with whom he stayed regularly. He also embraced the Buddhist religion which you could see through his actions and life-style.

I mostly lost touch with Dick following the Loaf Mountain trip in summer 2000, but will always remember the many enjoyable summer backpacks that we shared together. I'm not sure that we ever skied together or hiked a "mere" day trip. May he rest in peace.

David Mulligan March 2022.



Dick Jull enjoys breakfast on the Great Divide Trail in 1994



Dick Jull was "Born to Backpack". Above, he is in the vicinity of Mt. Wilson in Sept 1998.

Alistair Des Moulins tribute:

Dick joined the Ramblers in the early 1970s and was a member for almost 30 years and a trip coordinator for most of that time. I met Dick in March 1982 when I joined the Ramblers. Most of the trips Dick coordinated were backpacking trips or winter overnight ski touring trips. On the Wednesday after the May long weekend in 1982 Dick announced a backpack to Aylmer Lookout and Mount Aylmer. This was the first trip of his that I signed up for and I was the only person to sign up. Heading out to Banff it was apparent that there was much more snow than there had been the previous weekend. We got into the snow at 6000' and soon it was knee deep. We spent the night in the hut by the lookout. Early the next morning, hoping for firmer snow, we were on the way up towards Mount Aylmer. But after 4 hours we had only gone 2.5 kilometres and not made it to the pass so we headed back and returned to the car. I was disappointed that we had not got to the peak but Dick was just happy to have had a weekend in the mountains.

Since that trip I was on over 120 overnight trips with him and in the shoulder seasons it was often just the 2 of us. While he enjoyed getting to a summit or other objective the main thing for him was to be out there and it was even better if we had a fire at camp. His favourite trips were the 9 day trips where we were usually in places new to each of us, and the favourite time on those trips were the days where we had a 2 night camp and got to know the surrounding area. We shared 9 of those longer trips with a few other Ramblers as well.

We used to eat a full breakfast on weekend trips. I would bring sausages and he would bring the eggs. On winter trips the eggs would sometimes freeze and he would patiently chip off the shells and place the solid eggs in the pot lid we used as a frying pan. And all this was usually done over a wood fire.

He always carried a big pack and often offered food to people at supper time and at stops during the days. I thought of taking no food on a trip and accepting all food offerings to see whether he had enough for me as well but never did test that idea. On the last day of our 9 day backpack in 1984 we were stopped for lunch and he offered everyone some cheese as he had an unopened pound of it. On most backpacks people are keen to reduce the weight of their own pack rather than reduce the weight of someone else's so no takers. He then said "Please have some, this is the second 9 day backpack that I have carried this pound of cheese on."

In 1986, Rick Welton, a former Rambler who became his doctor, diagnosed that Dick had the early stages of cancer and arranged surgery to get it removed. If it had not been for this diagnosis Dick might not have survived to see the end of the 1980s let alone the start of the 2020s. Anyway, with the prospect of a much shortened life, Dick ceased working and became a full time hiker and traveller. In the winter (October thru May) he spent time in India, Nepal, South East Asia, South Africa and New Zealand and he would return for the summer hiking season and to see his family but the first priority was to do his taxes!

In August 1989 on a 9 day backpack in the White Goat Wilderness, we had probably our most memorable wildlife encounter. Dick, Brian, Richard, Gail and I put up our tents on the east side of the north branch of McDonald Creek valley and notice there are about 8 caribou on the west side not far away. We make supper and head to our tents. The next morning is wet and we do not venture far. The caribou are still grazing across the valley. It is a very pleasant feeling that they sense we are not a threat to them and they, along with a larger group that come later, allow us to share their valley that day.

Dick used our house as a base during much of the 1990s and planning trips was easier for us. The 1997 9 day trip to the Elysium Pass area of Jasper National Park was the last 9 day backpacking trip he did. This was an area he had been to before and had a deep affection for. Leaving the pass on the last day he was very prophetic and said I don't think I will see this place again.

Health issues began to affect him. The last backpack I was on with him was the July long weekend of 2000 when we went to the head of the South Castle River from Waterton Park. David Mulligan, Gail and I went up Loaf Mountain on the middle day but Dick was content to stay with Betty Millham in the valley.

Since then he continued to enjoy being in the mountains on shorter (distance and time) trips and by spending more time in camp by the fire. One of his favourite haunts was Beatty Lake, where he could have a fire just over the BC boundary from Peter Lougheed Provincial Park. Also later he had trips with family in the Assiniboine area using helicopter access instead of hiking or skiing in as we used to.

I remained in contact with Will after our last backpacking trips by visiting him at his Renaissance residence or going out for lunch or supper. He had a very good appetite although it did not come close to that of Wally Drew. After the 9 day trip in 1985 we had 2 nights in Jasper before going to Castleguard Meadows for 3 days. On the first evening we went to a buffet at the Sawridge Hotel at the north end of town and ate a lot. We were back there the next night and the staff wanted to seat us as far away from the food as possible but Dick convinced the staff to let us sit much closer!

He fought off many health setbacks and in the last years took medication that seemed to hold the cancer at bay. But his eyesite was fading as well. He still wanted to spend time in the mountains and his son would wheel him in his wheel chair along some of the paved trails. Despite all these health issues he was very upbeat when I visited and this had much to do with his following of Buddhism from the time he spent in India and Nepal. This was his lot in life and he had had a good life. After moving south from Calgary in 2014, I maintained contact by phone and, when we were in Calgary, visited him at his residence, and later, at the various care facilities he was in. Right up to the fall of 2021 he really enjoyed reminiscing about the trips we did together and was always interested in the backpacking trips Gail and I had done or were planning to do. We last spoke in late January 2022 - he said he was not well, which was unusual. At the end of the phone call I said I'll talk to you next time and he said there may not be a next time and there wasn't.

Dick was the one who taught me a lot about hiking and backpacking in the Rockies after I moved to Calgary. I had not skied before moving to Calgary. He encouraged me to do overnight ski trips even though I had only done a few day trips and taught me a lot about camping in the winter. 1982-3 was my first ski season and I basically learned to ski with 40 pounds on my back. Dick had the patience to stay back with me when all the others rushed ahead. One time I remember him helping clean the ice off my skis when I failed to stop before the crossing of a creek near Baker Lake. I was very keen to get out on overnight winter trips but I do not recommend that anyone else learns to ski with a backpack on! I am grateful to him for being the mentor I needed in my first years in the Rockies and a companion on all the 120+ trips I was on with him. I am sure there are also many others along with myself who remember fondly the time spent with him, and on backpacking trips in particular.



Alistair Des Moulins, Jim Bruce and Will Jull near Tower Lake





Obituary, Calgary Herald

Richard (Dick/Will) - family man, life-long learner, lawyer, leader, and adventurer - passed on peacefully, surrounded by loving family two days after his 91st birthday.

Growing up in Calgary in the depression, Will shared his family's values of resourcefulness, service to others, hard work, economy and sharing. His love of nature and adventure was fostered by summers he and his family spent at the modest log cabin and open rangelands of Spencer Creek Ranch near Cochrane.

He attended Connaught Elementary, Rideau Park Junior High, Central High and the University of Alberta (B.A./LL.B). Will excelled as a student and earned numerous academic prizes and scholarships. He was also recognized as a leader, serving as president of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity and Pilot Officer in the RCAF University Reserve Squadron.

Will married Helen Steeves. He was a proud and loving father of four, with a deep respect for each of his children's individuality.

Will practised law from 1955 to 1986 in Edmonton and Calgary as a general practitioner. It was never his style to rely on legalese, instead he sought legal solutions that were clear and practical. Even in his retirement Will could cut to the essence of a legal problem and see practical and effective solutions for his family and friends who sought his advice. He was highly regarded by the legal community and by his clients for his integrity, fairness and effective legal counsel.

Will was a heartfelt lover of nature, culture and history. He loved back packing, trekking and skiing expeditions in the Canadian Rockies and around the world. As a respected leader in the Rocky Mountain Ramblers, Will was known by his fellow trekkers (many of whom became lifelong friends) as the one who carried the heaviest pack enabling him to be prepared for any emergency. He was the one who waited for the slowest in his group to make sure no one got discouraged or left behind. It was always the route less travelled that appealed to him.

During his years of travelling and trekking in India and Nepal, Will became deeply engaged with many people and communities, giving and receiving transformative support.

He aged humbly and gracefully, accepting the restrictions of health with grit and determination to find ways to connect with nature and enjoy the company of others. He enjoyed rich friendships at The Renaissance and later at Agecare Glenmore and Providence Care Centre.

His humble spirit, dry humour, astonishing stamina, and generous kindness changed many lives, along with his incredible memory and extensive travels which made him a wonderful storyteller.

He will be lovingly remembered by his four children Carolyn (George), David, Marnie (Georgine) and Grace. He is also survived by his grandchildren Marta, Sage and Roma; his brothers Edward (Anne) and Peter (Susan); his sisters-in-law Rosemary (George) and Rosemary (Bob); the mother of his children Helen, and a loving flock of twelve nieces and nephews; as well as his thirty great nieces and nephews and seven cousins.

Will was predeceased by his parents Reba and King Jull and his brothers, George and Bob.

A celebration of Will's life will be held in the summer of 2022. Those who wish to honour Will might consider spending a peaceful time in nature and making a timely gift to someone who needs it.

Published on March 9, 2022