

## J. Boyd Matchett Obituary

Sadly, John Boyd Matchett died peacefully in bed at 96 years-of-age in Tucson, Arizona on Monday, April 27, 2020 with Rose, his dear wife of 66 years, sitting by his side.

Born on June 19, 1923 in Hamilton, Ontario, he lived a long and varied life with a unique determination. Boyd was a gentleman of impeccable character who met the challenges of his times with grace and fortitude. He grew up in Moore Park, Toronto, during the depression – the son of Lloyd Leroy Matchett and Marian Kathleen (Boyd). His parents and sisters, Margaret Wold (Ragnar) and Elizabeth McClelland (Jack), are predeceased.

During Boyd's school years, he excelled in sports and academics and became Head Boy, School Captain, and Colonel of the Cadet Corps at UTS (University of Toronto Schools) graduating in 1942 with two scholarships. As the war raged, he was quickly accepted at 18 into the Royal Canadian Navy, becoming an officer in short order. Trained at King's College, Dalhousie University (Halifax) as a specialist in sonar and depth charges, at just 20 years-old, Boyd was assigned to the Corvette, *Kenagami* – which assisted a flotilla escort of merchant ships across the Atlantic. Initially a midshipman, he was promoted to lieutenant commander over his three-and-a half-years at war, and served on numerous ships, including the frigate, *Kokanee*, and river-class destroyer, *Chaudière*.

Post-war, Boyd completed his education at the University of Toronto and London School of Economics. Securing employment with Massey-Harris, the agricultural tractor company, he soon moved to Paris, France in August of 1948 and was the District Manager of the West-Central Loire area to Nantes and the coast. Speaking little French at the time, he recalled the difficulty of his first year; but, in his tenacious way, he became fluent (learning to both read and write French) and immersed himself in the French culture. Before he left for Europe, he signed up that summer as a charter member with the fledgling Osler Bluff Ski Club (OBSC) in Collingwood – although the club didn't open until 1949. He didn't ski there until a few years later, where he met his beloved Otilie Rose (Huycke).

Back in Canada for a year, Boyd and Rose were married on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1954, and lived in The Lonsdale – an apartment building his father built in Forest Hill. Their children, John, Robin, and Rosalie (Richard Miller), were born over the next few years – Robin and Rosalie back in France, when Boyd and Rose lived in Paris and then Garches, a western suburb.

Returning to Canada in early 1960, Boyd became a consultant with Urwick Currie in Toronto. While there, he was assigned to Cara Operations – a family-owned, national food company. He soon made the decision to join it, eventually becoming its CEO. For 20 years, Boyd stewarded the expansion and direction of the company, from transportation catering for national rail and airlines, to franchise restaurants. Throughout those years, he was active in the Toronto business community as company director to Book and Periodical Acquisitions, Simpark Lands, Cairn Capital Inc., Boots Drug Stores, Sunnybrook Medical Centre Institute, and the Council on Drug Abuse (CODA). He was also on the Board of Governors of the University of Guelph, President of the University Club, and, for a time, sat on the board of OBSC. As a member and director of the Badminton and Racquet Club, he pursued his love of squash and tennis. He also belonged to the Royal Automobile Club Pall Mall in London, UK, and later the Ventana Golf and Racquet Club in Tucson, Arizona.

During the summers, he would spend as much time as possible in Temagami, North Ontario, where his father acquired Island 989 in 1914. Temagami was the lodestone of Boyd's heart since early childhood. He loved the pristine purity of its ancient glacial waters and rugged archipelago of the Canadian Shield. He was an avid swimmer, and when a tennis court became available on his good friend George Small's island, they formed an informal club. In private, he read ceaselessly, often in French, and liked to discuss world events, culture, and history. A canoe enthusiast, he was keen to take his young family on canoe trips, as he had been a camp counsellor at Camp Temagami in his youth. Later, he refurbished an authentic, Indigenous birch-bark canoe that his father had purchased in 1912 before WW I.

Throughout the years skiing at Osler, he also took his family to numerous ski areas in North America and Europe. In August of 1971, he organized a memorable six-week road trip in France and London. He often travelled to the Caribbean, where he rented villas large enough to accommodate family. Retiring at 61 in 1984, Boyd returned to France, and while travelling in the South, he and Rose decided to take on a new challenge by purchasing the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Château de Fontarèches near Uzès (which had ramparts, drawbridge, turrets, a forest maze, and even a small vineyard). With their usual resolve, Boyd and Rose spent a year renovating, and for twenty years entertained in their *pièce-de-la-résistance*. Boyd built a beautiful tennis court, large Romanesque pool complex, and a waterfall. Anyone who visited them there would never forget the experience.

Between Temagami and Fontarèches, Boyd had achieved a well-rewarded lifestyle from many years of hard work. Later, he and Rose added a new home in Tucson, AZ to escape the Canadian winter (where their good friends, Howard and Jacqueline Thomas, resided). Now with numerous grandchildren – Jonathan (Lara Chatterjee), Leo (Emilie Palamides), Jesse (Marta Borges), Katya, Robin Boyd, Anarie Rose, Victor Short (Irene Atimango), and Otilie Short – and great-grandchildren, Kasper, Ella, and Jasper – Boyd prided himself with this great brood and helped generously where he could. As well, there are his nephews from the Norwegian family of his sister Margaret: Eric Wold (Bente), Michael (Mary), and David (Elisabeth). The Canadian clan included nieces from his sister, Elizabeth – Susie Drinkwater, Carol McCabe (Bob), Sarah McClelland (Ron), and Annie McClelland (Bay Weyman) – nephew Rob (Ingrid), and all the grand-nephews and nieces who are too numerous to name.

In view of all he had achieved, and ironically a man of simple tastes, Boyd was cut of a strong moral probity. He was a serious man who believed in the eternal wisdom of a healthy body and mind, yet he had a funny side and a wry humor that often went unnoticed. Anyone who knew him would be surprised by his knowledge of natural medicine, which he subscribed to almost religiously. A leader in ways, even back in the sixties, he could be seen jogging every morning – something uncommon at the time. He owned one of the first British Jaguar cars in Canada and went on annual, helicopter-skiing trips during the seventies and eighties in the Bugaboos. Open to ideas, he could think outside the box. Politically liberal and fiscally conservative, he applied himself diligently to that end. Absolutely, he was his own man, but one who no doubt was transparently honest and tremendously gifted as an enlightened being. He will be sorely missed by all, many of whom are not mentioned here. It gives us joy that such a man was born and lives with us in spirit.