

Celebrating a Founding Father

DR. RICHARD ROSSMAN



How would you describe a gentle giant? Here are some of the things friends and colleagues say when talking about Dr. Richard Rossman, truly a beloved gentle giant in our community:

- Keen learner
- Master clinician
- Deeply committed to providing care for his patients
- A strong mentor
- Having a kind and gentle bedside manner

And, of course, he is one of the founding fathers of the OAG – that speaks to his commitment to our profession, his fellow gastroenterologists, and the practice of GI in Ontario. Now, it is our privilege and pleasure to honour Dr. Rossman on the occasion of his retirement from active practice at the end of April.

Dr. Rossman began his medical path with his BSc at the University of Toronto in 1966. While at the U of T, he met Carol, the love of his life, and they were married just four days before he started medical school in Ottawa. They returned to Hamilton, Carol's hometown, and Richard chose GI as his specialty.

Dr. Rossman did his internship at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, and his residency in GI in Hamilton and Toronto from 1971 to 1976. This may have sparked his interest in the concerns and working conditions of residents and interns and resulted in his involvement in PAIRO.

On completing his residency, Richard joined the medical staff of Chedoke Hospitals in Hamilton and served as their sole gastroenterologist for many years. With the merger of Chedoke and McMaster Hospitals, he joined McMaster University, where he contributed meaningfully to the education of both medical students and residents. It was here that he was notable for sharing his knowledge and skills with them; he was a very strong, positive influence on those he trained. He has maintained his involvement with McMaster throughout his working career, both in GI practice and through his teaching affiliation with McMaster University Medical Centre.

Richard was deeply committed to providing care for patients in rural Ontario. He worked to establish a strong gastroenterology and endoscopy practice at West Haldimand General Hospital. This program has provided care for patients of Haldimand and Norfolk counties, and Six Nations. It was here that Dr. William Thorogood, an anaesthetist, met Richard. He recalls Richard's influence on him as a mentor who has provided consistent advice and guidance, both for him and his patients. Dr. Thorogood also remembers that Dr. Rossman engaged staff, his patients, and their families, with competence, skill, kindness, compassion and, most importantly, respect. From being colleagues, they became friends – a pattern that has repeated itself throughout Richard's career. Our own Dr. Bruno Salena, OAG's first President, also remembers Richard's kind and gentle bedside manner and the encouragement and support he gave to patients, students, and medical staff.

As if building and maintaining his practice and influencing future doctors through his teaching isn't enough, Richard also gave generously of his time to our GI community. He is a former Chair of the OMA Section on Gastroenterology and is a founding father of the Ontario Association of Gastroenterology (OAG) and the Specialists Coalition of Ontario (SCO). In 2002, the OAG honoured him with the Axcan Pharma Award for his distinguished service to the OAG and our specialty.

Richard and Carol are enjoying a long and happy marriage. They have two children, Seth and Lianne, son-in-law, Ramanjot, and two grandchildren, Joshua and Avtej. Richard supports Carol's celebrated career as an artist. The couple enjoy travelling to the American Southwest, where they indulge their love of horseback riding and the ranch lifestyle.

Richard has indeed touched and enriched so many lives. He was, and continues to be, a gentle giant in our closely-knit GI community!