

## TRIBUTE

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### James L. Connors, QC

*December 8, 1955 – April 3, 2008*



Look at that smile. Here is a man fully aware of the many blessings in his life and deeply grateful for every one of them: the happy family, a successful and satisfying career in law, a man loved by and committed to his community.

He golfed, he sailed, he traveled, he appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada and won his case, which is why we have TV cameras in our legislatures, by the way. Jim and his partner, opposite more than 40 lawyers from half a dozen provinces and the feds. It was a good day in the life of Jim Connors. Afterward, his innate humility would only let him say that he took the case, the hopeless, politically unpopular case, because “it just wasn’t right” to deny citizens a chance to watch their government at work.

Jim gave himself to civic duty, offering countless hours of service to innumerable community organizations. The litany of accomplishments could inflate a man of lesser virtue to unbecoming pride. But Jim told his friends that his dearly beloved wife Cathy was really the smart one. He was a devoted father to Paul, Lauren and Patrick, giving them a legacy of intelligence, humour and compassion.

How evil is cancer. Barely 50 years old, this champion of good was ambushed by a disease and a health system that he described as “the best of care and the worst of care”.

Jim reminds us how many cancer advocates evolve. He spent a lifetime fixing a wrong, working for a cause, helping the vulnerable. When Jim found that the Nova Scotia health system was unwilling to pay for his cancer drug, he worried about the other colorectal cancer patients in the province. He could pay for his treatments and he did, but what would become of the others? That question drove him to a new cause and to us.

Imagine Jim, past President of the Nova Scotia Conservative Party, dropping in on his old pal, the Minister of Health, to talk about the wicked perfidy of withholding drugs from cancer patients. But it didn’t work. Not until shortly after Jim Connors died did the Nova Scotia government decide to pay for the drug. Perhaps that reversal indicates remorse or respect – perhaps it was an effort to relieve the pain of waiting too long to do the right thing.

Cancer is everywhere; everybody knows this grief. We were fortunate to have Jim as a member of the Board and we honour his memory by persevering with compassion, integrity and knowledge.