

STORIES OF CARE

Being Family Again



When Joan's husband, Dan, was in hospital with terminal cancer, he knew he did not want to spend his final days in a hospital setting.

Joan and her family had heard good things about Dr. Kemp's House. They hoped hospice care would offer Dan comfort, dignity and a place where their family could be together.

Dan arrived at Dr. Kemp's House in October. He was there for less than three days, but that time gave his family something they will always remember.

"They were absolutely wonderful," Joan said. "They took such good care of him, but they also took such good care of me and our family."

Dan and Joan had been married for almost 69 years. Joan describes him as a loving husband, father and friend. He enjoyed shuffleboard, camping up north and being around people.

"He was a people person," Joan said, "always putting a smile on someone's face with his dry sense of humour."

At Dr. Kemp's House, Dan's humour and personality continued to shine through. Joan remembers the team finding him a green blanket after he mentioned his Irish heritage. She also remembers the lighthearted jokes he shared with Dr. Chan, the minister and staff, including asking whether they were Irish.

Those small moments mattered.

So did one much larger moment.

While Dan was receiving care at Dr. Kemp's House, their daughter and now son-in-law were married there. Staff helped the family bring the wedding together in less than 24 hours.

"They just took everything and ran with it," Joan said. "They couldn't do enough for us."

The team helped Dan get ready for the wedding, carefully adapting one of his dress shirts and helping him wear a tie. Joan remembers seeing him dressed up and ready to be part of the day.

"It was beautiful," she said. "Absolutely beautiful."

Dan was able to see their daughter get married. Joan remembers the grin on his face, one she had not seen for a while because he had been so sick.

"He was so happy," she said. "We were all so happy."

For Joan, that day is part of what Dr. Kemp's House gave their family: space to be together, to laugh, to celebrate and to be with Dan in a way that felt true to who he was.

"It meant that we could be a family there," Joan said.

Dan was at Dr. Kemp's House for less than three days, but the care he and his family received continues to stay with Joan. "We appreciate everything they did for us in that short time," she said. There are no words to describe the care and compassion we experienced, and the gratitude we have for the incredible team at Dr. Kemp's House."