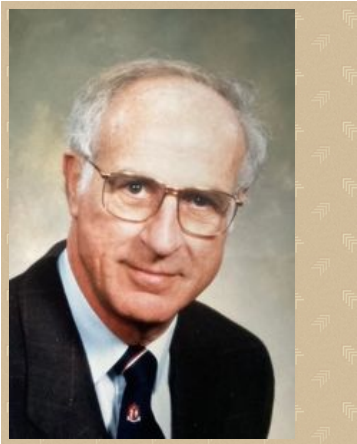


Daniel Alexander Gillis

Passed 03/27/2024



Obituary For Daniel Alexander Gillis

What a wonderful life! While we are profoundly saddened to say goodbye to our deeply loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, our sorrow is tempered by the joy of having shared our life with Daniel Alexander (Alex) Gillis who passed away on March 27th at his home in Dartmouth. Born in 1928 to Tanner and Hilda (Chisholm) Gillis, Alex grew up in Port Hawkesbury, Cape Breton. He earned his undergraduate degree from St. Francis Xavier University and received his medical degree from Dalhousie University. After several post-graduate medical residencies, both in Canada and the United States, he came home to Halifax and spent the bulk of his illustrious career as Chief of Surgery at the Izaak Walton Killam Children's Hospital. In 1997, he was awarded the Order of Canada for the introduction and development of techniques of open-heart surgery in children which earned him international acclaim. And while his professional accolades were numerous, Alex's greatest joys were his family and his golf game. We're not sure which got top billing. He was predeceased by his beloved first wife Rosie (Langley) and son Mark. He is survived by his wife, his rock and his best friend Judy (Sutherland), his children Jane (David), Sandy (Pat), Colin (Jane) and Lorna (Ken) his grandchildren Spencer (Sonia), Robyn (Matthew) and Erica (Jason), and his great-grandchildren, Bennett, Ellis, Gwen, Abby and Thomas. When Alex married Judy, he happily became a second father to her children, Frank (Liz), Mark (Julie) and Nick (Lyndsay) and grandfather to Elizabeth, Madison, Mackenzie, Rowan, Damien, and Elsie. As per his wishes, there will be no funeral service. We think it likely he didn't want to stick around long enough to witness such an event as his version of heaven consists of hot summer days, first-class golf courses and the perfect putter. He will be greatly missed and lovingly remembered. Judy and Alex's family also wish to extend their heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Frank MacDonald who went above and beyond in providing Alex with kind and compassionate care.

[Send flowers to the service of Daniel Alexander Gillis](#)

Condolences

Dr Gillis. Rest in peace. You are forever in my memory. Alison Jones

- Alison Jones

I had only heard of Dr.Gillis passing yesterday morning! I have so many wonderful memories of my initial training days at the former Halifax Children's Hospital, in the mid 1960's, and later within the IWK

as both a student and as a staff Clinical Perfusionist. Dr. Gillis expected a discipline within surgery that would help establish my motivation towards constant improvement throughout my career! In later years I would have the good fortune to reunite with Dr. Gillis and to recall this initial open heart era. He was a great teacher, a very disciplined Cardiac Surgeon whose surgical abilities were second to none. Thank you to Dr. Alex Gillis and my sincere condolences to his wife and family! You will be greatly missed....the journey continues in what others would now do.... Jim MacDonald, Retired Clinical Perfusionist, Ilderton, Ontario.....

- Jim MacDonald

I am so sorry to hear about Alex's passing. My husband Christian always spoke highly of Alex and of his work at the IWK. Alex was a dedicated surgeon who worked closely with Christian during his time as chief of surgery. After Christian's passing just recently, I understand how difficult this time is and my condolences and prayers are with his family.

- Terry Belcourt

I just found out about Dr. Gillis' passing when I came across the Dal In Memoriam piece, looking him up on 'the internet'. Today as I get ready to drive to Margaree for a community meeting, I was reflecting on what an inspiration he was to me, how much I enjoyed working with him at the IWK and thought wouldn't it be great to see him again or give him a call, only to find out he passed away almost a month ago. As a fellow Cape Bretoner, we talked often about our beloved Island and exchanged funny stories about the characters back home. I could always count on Dr. Gillis when planning for the IWK Telethon to give me ideas for heartwarming patient stories and to explain complexities of medical treatment and procedures in a way the viewers would understand. He could talk easily about the remarkable advances made in paediatric healthcare and how that was possible through public support. When he stepped in as Acting CEO of the IWK, we worked on a number of tough issues. His steady hand and sound wisdom got me through to the other side with a solution for all involved. I'm sitting here smiling and with tears of sadness as I write this but knowing he had a life well-lived. He was a wonderful man, amazing doctor, great colleague and I will miss him more, now that I know I will never hear that voice of reason, that laugh on the other end of a phonecall when we both end up falling back into our lyrical Cape Breton accent and sharing a chuckle. To Judy and all his family, so sorry for your loss and may the memories keep him close. Oidche Mhath, Doc. Leanne

- Leanne Birmingham-Beddo

Dear Judy, walking through the halls of the IWK these last few weeks has conjured up visions of Dr. Gillis, with his lab coat hitched over his shoulder, heading somewhere, perhaps the OR, clinic, inpatient rounds of a meeting. He was a pillar of the IWK, a skilled surgeon and fearless leader with a respected vision. He held us to the highest standards. He was present for most of my career as a nurse at the IWK, and what I will remember, above and beyond all that he accomplished, was his kindness and dedication to the families he served. Sincere condolences, Anne Gniewek

- Anne Gniewek

Condolences on the passing of Alex. Thoughts and prayers with you all. Paul Langley & family

- Paul Langley

My condolences to Sandy, Pat, and all the Gillis family. Certainly a life well lived. My thoughts are with you all. Jennifer Power

- Jennifer Power

Sending along our deep sympathies to Sandy, Pat, and all of Dr. Gillis' family. You certainly have had an inspirational role model through the years. Hoping you can find strength and hope as you move forward. Sending hugs and warm thoughts, Jane and Brian Power-Grimm

- Jane & Brian Power-Grimm

I was saddened to hear that Dr. Gillis has passed. I worked with him first as a radiology fellow and then on staff for many years. he was a dedicated physician, caring deeply for each of his patients. He also worked to maintain a very high standard of practise. I learned so much from him. "Surgery rounds" where we discussed all the cases that had come through that week were a wonderful place to learn, acknowledge mistakes and learn how to do better next time. His favourite phrase was "Everyone gets to eat crow at some time" It was non judgemental collaborative and respectful, a great place to learn. Sincere condolences to Judy, his family and extended family. Marian Macken and Andrew Issekutz

- Marian Macken

Sandy, my condolences to you and your family on the passing of you father. He had an amazing career helping others and raising a good family. May he rest in peace.

- Cliff Falkenham

I first met Dr Gillis on family vacations at Green Gables in the Sixties & at Ashburn - Halifax Curling Club & the IWK with our Medical Device portfolio. He was respected - looked up to & loved by all who knew him. What a Life - truly amazing.

- Tom Fetterly

It is with a very heavy heart that I offer my sincerest condolences to you the family of one of the most loved people known to me kind, Dr. Alex Gillis. It was a very special feeling have been able to call him my friend, he always made me feel I was something special in his life. My heart was broken when I got the news of his passing. Thoughts and prayers go out to Judy and all of Dr. Gillis' children and grand children, I wish I could adequately express how my heart s saddened by his passing. May you rest in peace my good golfing (40+years) from your Wino Wednesday buddy. Love to you always.

- John Mason

Dr. Gillis was one of my medical professors and has been unforgettable. He was at IWK when I worked with him. He was exceptionally knowledgeable, great at showing what mattered to trainees. A mutual friend, one of his colleagues, told me he has passed away. One of the best ever.....

- Mary Redmond

Dear Judy and Gillis Family I first met Dr Gillis when he performed minor surgery on my 8-year-old son (who is now 50)! His skill in speaking with an anxious mother and a curious 8 year old set a benchmark for me as I sought future medical care for my family. Few could meet that degree of excellence in communication skills or in empathy! Later Dr Gillis and I overlapped through the IWK in the Auxiliary (of which he was one of only 4 Honourary Members), on the IWK Board as we merged the Grace and the IWK , and as we planned the 100th anniversary of the IWK. These opportunities to meeting with Dr Gillis and witness his leadership skill and his commitment to the vision of the IWK was always a gift. We became "first name" friends and I treasured the guidance and common sense of my friend Alex! One in a million is an inadequate descriptor! ONE of a kind is more apt. The poet Leonard Cohen described such a man as follows: "There are some men who should have mountains to bear their names to time.... I had a friend: he lived and died in mighty silence and with dignity..... This is not a Mourning song but only the naming of a mountain on which I walk... I name this mountain after to him." Respectfully and with Love, Kelly Cameron

- Kelly Cameron

Dear Judy and Family, So sorry to hear of the loss of Alex. Keep the beautiful memories you share in your heart. Sincere sympathy, Brenda (Fraser) Mountain

- Brenda Mountain

Condolences to Dr. Gillis' family and all who mourn with them at this time of sad loss. As an MD intern, many years ago, I worked with Dr. Gillis and to this day I have never forgotten his caring, associated with his medical expertise. In addition, he was respectful of an interns' lack of experience/knowledge and proceeded to teach with, however, non-judgmental affability. As well, he provided a clear example of optimal functioning regardless of the hour!! May he eternally rest in peace.

- S. David Bogart

Our deepest sympathy to you all. Alex was a wonderful cousin and a great friend. Alex and I always shared a private joke, the many times he asked me to join him on golf course, I would tell him he is not going to embarrass me on the golf course, he always answered with "Alex laugh" he will be missed by many. Our prayers and thoughts are with you all. Almon and Margaret Chisholm

- Almon and Margaret Chisholm

Dear Judy, My deepest condolences to you and your family. Dr. Gillis was always so nice when I had any interaction with him in his role as VP of Medicine at the IWK. My thoughts and prayers are with you all. Cathy Hamblin (formerly from the Dept of Obs and Gyn)

- Cathy Hamblin

Please accept my sincere condolences for your loss of a lovely human being. I knew Alex from my time in Saudi Arabia with my husband, Tim Dean. Alex paved and eased our entrance to the Kingdom and Tim admired Alex so very much. You will miss him terribly as I have learned this past year without Tim. My sincere sympathy, Linda Dean

- Linda Dean

Judy and family, I was so saddened to hear of Alex's death. I am one of many IWK nurses to have had the privilege of working with him from 1967 (as a student nurse) and then for 12 years as an RN. He was always kind, considerate and thoughtful to all staff and his patients and their parents. A brilliant man, we were so lucky to have him at the IWK for so many years. Sincere condolences Wendy Rees

- Wendy Rees

John and Judi Randles Judi and I are saddened by Alex's passing. Judi worked in both PICU and NNICU as a nurse at various times from 1973 to 1998. They had a wonderful relationship and Alex was a tremendous surgeon and compassionate leader in his vital role in the ICU. I was honoured to be invited by Alex to serve on the Board of Directors at Ashburn Golf Club during his term as President in 1982. He was such a good guy and was one of about a dozen of us who would participate in our "Fall Tour" at the New Course on weekends after the course closed stopped only by freezing rain. Debts were often settled over a cold beer at the White Owl Pub in Fall River and Alex was often on the receiving end! It was always a treat for Judi and I in recent years when we saw Alex occasionally at the Old Course and had a chat...A great man who will be missed!

- John and Judi Randles

Alex was a wonderful person in so many ways. It takes a good person, with good skills, to be a good surgeon, but he was so much more. He didn't aspire to leadership, but when called upon by his colleagues who respected him, he led through some difficult times. He went about his work as a caring pediatric surgeon, but when called, he could also deal with any difficult issue just by being

understanding and reasonable. When I was Dean of Medicine I had some tough issues, only solved by the help of a calm, good leader like Alex. I enjoyed our talk about St. FX and Cape Breton roots, but we could then get down to solving some serious issues. I will always remember his kindness and support.

- Jock Murray

Dear Judy, so sorry to read of your husband's passing. Our deepest sympathy. Ann & Greg

- Ann & Greg Robley

Thank you to Rosie for being an extra parent. Thank you to Sandy, Mark and Colin for being lifelong friends. Condolences to Judy, Jane, Lorna and rest of family. Thank you to DA for being there, education and mentoring. Your advice, teaching and leading by example has been transformational to all those who have had the fortune to be under your tutelage. You are a hero to all of us.

- Phil Smith

I wish to express my sincere condolences to Dr Gillis. Because of his gifted surgical skills in 1966, I am here. He was a loving person as well as Dr. You are forever in my heart Dr Gillis. Jennifer (Borden) Corkum

- Jennifer Corkum

Dr. Gillis was a great friend of the family and one of the most genuine person we knew. They don't make them like that anymore. The Haliburton Family

- Bill Haliburton

My sympathy and prayers for all of Dr. Gillis' family. Even though I knew some of his family including in-laws my conversations with him were at the Health Centre. I so appreciated his care for everyone. How much he is missed. love, Joan

- Joan O'Keefe sc

Dear Judy & my Gillis nieces, nephews and their children, having just returned home Marius & I were deeply saddened by the news of Alex's passing. He was a kind, compassionate, understanding and helpful brother-in-law to Rosie's younger brother. On my visits to Connaught Avenue Alex always wanted to know what was happening at X and how was my golf gaming going. The news from X was always more exciting and interesting than anything about my golf game but he always asked about both. A true gentleman, excellent surgeon who gave us all so much, one of the good guys who'll be remembered fondly. Our prayers & sympathy to all. Tom & Marius

- Tom Langley

Judy and family, In my 40 years as a paediatric respirologist at the IWK I had many occasions to call on Alex for advice and help when dealing with difficult respiratory surgical problems. He was always collegial and wise. His surgical expertise and outstanding communication skills with families and staff are a lasting legacy at the IWK. My condolences to you and your family. Dan Hughes.

- Dan Hughes

Alex was a great friend and mentor through our shared time at the IWK and beyond. I fondly remember every detail of our first meeting. Alex ate lunch while peppering me (a candidate for a role at the IWK) with rapid fire questions. I did my best to answer and ate my lunch later. From that day forward I came to rely on his wisdom and his thoughtful advice and to value his friendship and support. Alex cared deeply for the children and families who came to him for his rare skills and expertise and; they were his focus whenever decisions about the future of children's health care needed his leadership. I am grateful for time spent in his company at work and at play. (Although I'll never understand his "unique" but ever successful golf swing.) And, I will always remember Alex with respect, admiration and love. What a wonderful life indeed!! Rick Nurse, with condolences from Rick and Marie

- Rick Nurse

My name is Sean Andrews. Dr Gillis saved my life when I was only 4 years old, having done an emergency heart operation at the IWK. I have had an amazing life so far (51 years old now). I have a beautiful 9 year old boy, who I've told the story of how lucky I was to have had Dr Gillis available when I was almost left this Earth. Thank you from the bottom of my heart Dr Gillis. You were my angel on Earth and now one in heaven. Rest well sir.

- Sean Andrews

My sincere condolences to Jane and all of Dr. Gillis' family/friends. My first encounter with Dr. Gillis took place in 1966. He performed my first open heart surgery and it went without a hitch. He saved my life and I am truly grateful to have been his patient. He was instrumental in my coming to work at the IWK years later. He was compassionate, kind, empathetic and humble. He was loved by all the lives that he touched, including mine. Debbie Barrett-Dunn

- Debbie Barrett-Dunn

to the Gillis Family, On behalf of myself and the Ashburn Masters, I would like to extend our profound condolences on the recent passing of your Dad Alex. He was a long time member of this group of older golfers who enjoyed getting together every Thursday year round to play golf and have a lunch. He will be missed RIP Alex. John Wilson, president

- John Wilson

Sending my sympathies to you Lorna and your family. Your Dad obviously made a huge difference to so many and his legacy will carry on for generations. Keep him close in your memories. Tom Brennan

- Tom Brennan

My sincere condolences to the family. It was my pleasure to work with Dr. Gillis. He was a great person who always took the time to have a personal word with each person he met. Rest in peace, Dr. Gillis.

- Kelvin King

Judy and family, it was a pleasure and honor to have worked with Dr Gillis over the years. He maintained a high standard of care and compassion. My condolences. Shirley McDougall

- Shirley McDougall

Sending condolences to Dr. Gillis' family. He left a lasting impact on everyone who knew him. I was honoured to have known him and respected him greatly. He was a true gentleman.

- Bernadette Purcell

Dr. Gillis performed life saving surgery on me the day I was born in 1962. He continued to take an interest in my progress as I grew up and well after I was no longer one of his patients. For my entire life so far and even during the conversation I had with my mother just this evening when she informed me of his passing, she (along with my late father) spoke very respectfully and with gratitude for the care he gave me when I was a baby. There are many, many people who will always appreciate and never forget him.

- Scott Clish

Alex did have a wonderful life and was a wonderful man and colleague in the Canadian association of Pediatric Surgery (CAPS). It was a privilege to be considered a friend. My sympathy to all his family. Angus Juckes

- Angus Juckes

Dear Judy, I'm truly sorry to hear of Alex's passing. I fondly remember the great times we had golfing and the times he would call on the phone and ask what I would like in my coffee before coming down to the section for a chat. He had a great influence on me during my time at the hospital. You both meant a lot to me. You're in my thoughts. Mike Merrimen

- Mike Merrimen

My sincere condolences to his family Alex Gillis was a gentleman as well as being an excellent surgeon and Administrator. His contributions will serve many in the future as they did during his medical service.

- Kevin McNamara

My sincere condolences to all of Alex's family. I only knew Alex through golf. When Alex was playing golf a smile was always there, well almost always, if he missed a putt that he thought he should have made, he head would bend forward a touch and he would shake his head for a short bit, and then off to the next hole and the next golf shot. The game of golf tells one a lot about the person playing, and Alex's fine being was front and center at the golf course.

- Christopher Hopgood

Dear Judy - so sorry to hear of Alex's passing. My thoughts are with you and your family at this difficult time. Diann Nicholson

- Diann Nicholson

To Judy and Family I was sorry to hear about the passing of Alex. I remember him well when I was a medical student. He was a great teacher and to assist him in the OR was a pleasurer to watch his skill at work. May he rest in peace. Merv Shaw

- merv shaw

I am sorry to hear this sad news. After I came to IWK in 2002, I had the privilege of working with Alex in his administrative roles, rather than his surgical ones, but was humbled by his considerate and compassionate manner in dealing with all problems. I delighted in all the stories I heard of his clinical work over many years. And it was a pleasure to have known and worked alongside him. Rest well and

be assured of the great things you achieved. Bruce Crooks

- Bruce Crooks

I remember my early days as a Department Chief at the IWK - Dr. Gillis was a wonderful source of advice and mentorship. He always focused on what was best for the patient and their family- He was also a strong supporter of efforts to promote global health at the IWK - his legacy is felt every day at the IWK and beyond. Doug Sinclair

- Doug Sinclair

Dear Judy. It was with sadness Kate and I of Alex 's passing. He was a superb, very skilled and accomplished physician and surgeon. He was my teacher, a great mentor and friend. He had a very full life and influenced many surgeons as a role model. Our condolences to you and the family. Dave Amirault

- David Amirault

Judy, so sorry to hear of the loss of Dr. Gillis. He was so kind and caring....I remember working at the IWK and he would enter the ENT Dept to meet with Dr. John Donaldson...he was always very pleasant to me....Thinking of you through this most difficult time

- Debbie Gaetan

What an impact this lovely man had on my life. I first met Dr. Gillis as a child, as he operated on my baby sister, Terina in 1969. He gave her a pacemaker to keep her heart and her saucy attitude in top form. We spent countless hours in a hospital room and I remember him popping in over Christmas to see her/us. It was because of Dr. Gillis and his expertise on a national scale that the military kept us close, so I was fortunate to be a military child who never had to move around. I then encountered Dr. Gillis when I began working at the IWK in 2003, and he not only remembered Terina, but asked after my parents as well. My work at the IWK now includes organizing awards, including the DA Gillis Award for Clinical Excellence. I am sorry he is not a vibrant part of this world any longer, but I deeply appreciate and admire the impact he had and my condolences to you all.

- Arlene MacAskill

When I lived on Cambridge Street, our family would waddle down to the Gillis' periodically or they would drop by. Lovely person, always ready with a smile and something nice to say. Happy memories

- Philip DeMont

It is with profound sadness that I offer my sincere condolences to you , Judy and the Gillis family. I, like many have stated, had the privilege of working with and learning from Dr Gillis. I admired his compassion , dedication and commitment to families and community in which he humbly shared his knowledge and skills. He also enjoyed teasing me when I was stumped with an English word. Lucille Cormier

- Lucille Cormier

Such a giant in Canadian medicine and an even finer human being. The other lads and myself will definitely miss the Wednesday afternoon talks...and laughs. God bless you Alex.

- Michael Huck

Judy & Family; My heartfelt condolences on Alex's passing. From my days as a medical student in the Old Childrens Hospital where I first met this most impressive clinician , surgeon & gentleman ; to becoming his family doctor years later in Dartmouth , I can say without fear of contradiction that he was without equal. Talented , thoughtful , respectful of all , a leader & most of all humble.I must admit however , on the greens of Ashburn an occasional grumble might be heard. He truly loved his golf & his annual trips to Ingonish. No man had a better rock or best friend than you Judy - especially evident in these last months of his failing health. To you his children & grandchildren , you have much to be proud of he was a shining example to generations of med students , colleagues & countless patients & their families. A wonderful life indeed. RIP Alex.

- Dr. Dan Reid

Dear Judy & Family, I can easily say that myself and many other Nurses, were very privileged to work at the IWK with Alex, he was kind, empathetic, very humble, and an amazing Surgeon. The last time I saw Alex was at Ashurn Golf, a place he thoroughly enjoyed. Rose and Judy were blessed to have him in the lives, two wonderful Woman, and he loved them both dearly With sincere sympathy. Love Ruby Blois

- Ruby. Blois

My deepest condolences, Sandy, to you and your family. Karen Colter

- Karen Colter

Dear Lorna, Jane, Sandy, Colin, Judy and family. I'm so sorry for your loss of such an amazing father & husband. I was very sad to hear of his passing. My memories of him go back a very long way - about 55 or more years. I loved visiting the house and always felt welcome at sleepovers, birthday parties or just hanging out in the family room. I loved seeing him in the hallways of the IWK when I worked there for over 20 years. I was usually greeted with a "Hi Finky". I hope that all of the wonderful memories help you through this difficult time. Thinking of all of you. Elizabeth (Finky) Smith

- Elizabeth Smith

To Judy and all the family: Nova Scotia has lost a 'giant' in Health care and leaves behind a reputation for all in the field to emulate..Dr.Alex was a gentle man and a gentleman and a leader who blazed trails and treated all equally,the Staff,from Professionals to domestics and dedicated to the care of patients entrusted to IWK CARE. AN OLD ADAGE IS APPROPRIATE IN DESCRIBING Dr.Alex,'ONE MAN CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE'.Dr.Alex DID EXACTLY THAT,!.It was a privilege to have known him and see first hand the tremendous and dedicated person he was,having served on the IWK BOARD for six years. THE IWK WILL BE WELL SERVED BY CONTINUING THE DR.ALEX GILLIS MODEL AS A GUIDE FOR ALL. SINCERELY, JACK AND EVELYN MACISAAC 607-2677 Gladstone st. Halifax B3K 0A3

- Jack and Evelyn macIsaac

Sincere sympathy to Judy and all if Dr.Gillis's family.Met Dr Gillis in 1982 when I started working on 8west at the IWK.He was a wonderful surgeon and so respected by staff and parents.He will never be forgotten.

- Melodee Boyd

As a neonatologist at the IWK for 30 years, Alex was my supporter, friend ,advisor in .many things. Eli Rees

- elihu rees

To Lorna, Sandy and the entire family, we express our heartfelt condolences for the loss of such an accomplished and beloved patriarch. We are sending you love as you navigate through this difficult time.

- Heidi Schedler and Andrew Sancton

Sending my sincere condolences to you , Judy , and his family. Dr Gillis has always been my hero. I worked with him in the Operating Room for so many years. He was one of a kind . He had such integrity and so much kindness for his patients and their families. He always had such high standards for himself and those who worked with him. He made us all want to be better. I was definitely one of his IWK family who loved and admired him. Such a bright light has dimmed. ζ

- Susan Crawford

Dear Lorna and family Sending our sympathy and a hug Pam and John Hughes

- Pam Hughes

We met Dr. Gillis in consult about proposed surgery for our three year old son. His clarity about what would occur and his friendly demeanor provided the necessary confidence that removed much of our concern and he performed a very successful procedure. Some years later I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Gillis on occasion and continued to be very impressed by his many medical talents and warm personality. Nova Scotia's medical system was indeed fortunate to have him as a leading part of it. Our sincere sympathy to all.

- Jamie and Mary Jean Muir

Indeed a life well lived. So many contributions to the community and beyond through his work. A pleasure to work with him over the years- and to hear him in troubled times talk about his values, his grounding in his family and his many efforts to ensure better outcomes for children. An honour to have known him

- Noni MacDonald

I worked with Dr. Gillis for twenty five years at the IWK and repeatedly experienced his sensitivity,compassion and care given to his patients and to their families. One example in Emergency where a very young child died and he asked the mother to put her head on his heart when he had to tell her that her child had died. He was a person of immense integrity and was loved and appreciated by his patients ,their families and staff.

- Marie Gallant

Dear Judy and Family - my sincere sympathy to you and your family on the passing of Dr. Gillis. I have sent notice to Dr. Riding to let him know and wish you all peace and prayers. Karen Dares

- Karen Dares

Colin and Jane. Sorry for your loss. With the time Danny spent at the IWK we were able to meet Dr. Gillis. Even though he was not Danny's doctor I think he made a point to see Danny because he was a relative of Jane's. He was a kind mind and was well respected

- Joyce Rushton

Dear Judy and family, sending my sincere condolences to you all. Dr. Gillis was my son's physician for several years in the 1970s and 1980s. Such was his care, compassion, and kindness that I will never forget him. As a young and first time parent of twins, one with a serious medical issue of which I knew nor understood anything, Dr. Gillis quickly assured me with his knowledge and subsequent excellent care of my son. I will never forget the time he always took to explain things. May he rest in peace. Kindest regards to you Judy, and your family. Jennifer Tanner (son Freddie)

- Jennifer Tanner

Judy and family I'm so sorry for your loss. One cannot think of the IWK without thinking of dear Dr. Gillis. Before I went to work in the OR I worked in catering and will never forget the day that I had set up the conference room with sandwiches, sweets and beverages. I had to leave to get more things and when I returned some residents had spotted the laid out food and were happy to sample it until I walked back in and told them that Dr. Gillis had ordered it for a meeting well the look of fear that came over their faces was indeed priceless! You are in my thoughts and prayers. Barbara Jean Bourgeois

- Barbara Jean Bourgeois

To Jane, Sandy, Colin, Lorna and the entire Gillis family. Our sincere condolences on the passing of Dr. Alex. What a life to be remembered and celebrated. Dan and Maria

- Daniel MacInnis

He was the sweetest and most humble man I have ever known. So sorry for your loss.

- Rosanne Dempsey

Dear Gillis Family, I send my sincere condolences on your loss. I worked with Alex for many years in ICU. He was a great surgeon, leader, mentor and teacher. He demonstrated such compassion to his patients and their families. It was such a pleasure to work with him. Sheila MacDonald

- Sheila MacDonald

Judy, I am sorry for your loss. I remember Alex interviewing me and also providing support when he was back in the Maritimes during my fellowship. I really enjoyed knowing him. I also fondly remember your trip to Hershey for Grand Rounds here. Alex will be sorely missed. Mary Catherine Santos

- Mary Catherine Santos

I started working with Dr Gillis in 1974 In the NNICU on 8W...it's impossible to describe what he meant to so many families...he was the best...I have so many fond memories...my thoughts and condolences to his family Margo Cadegan RN

- Margo Cadegan

What a wonderful brother-in-law he was, and a big part of our family. When anyone had a medical problem it was always call Alex and he would of course have the answer. We will miss him but he is now in a better place with so many of his relatives. He was loved by so many, my prayers and thoughts are with all of his family. Emily and family

- Emily Morgan

A Giant for sure and a mentor to so many including myself. His dedication to his patients was an example we all should emulate. His accomplishments could fill a book but his obituary defines the way he lived, died and practiced medicine. He did it his way. Condolences to Judy and family but find joy in reflecting on a life well lived and defined by giving to others.

- John Sullivan

To Judy, Jane and all of Alex's family, here marks the end of an era and all that legends are made of. I had the privilege to work with and for Alex when I started my career as a young hospital management intern at IWK. He was a mentor, a confidant and teacher. When I was meeting with him in the first weeks of the residency he said you cannot run a hospital unless you learn about every part of this place, to wit, he arranged for me to be an observer in the OR with him for a week. He also convinced Joe Hyndman to take me along for some orthopedic procedures. Alex was a principled, hard worker, great mentor to all and a kind soul. His presence in the thousands and thousands of lives will be missed forever, Alex was an extraordinary human. RIP.

- Robert zed

Growing up I had always heard of the great respect that Dr Gillis had from colleagues, fellow parishioners and friends of his, like my Dad. When I worked at Cancer Care Nova Scotia, I had the privilege of working with him on strategic agendas to address pediatric cancer research and care needs. I came to know that everything I knew of him, was 100 % accurate! Dr Gillis was such a gentleman. Kind, so knowledgeable, adept at surgery and administration, a rare combination. He made a profound impact on the health and wellness of Maritime pediatric patients and their families. I heard also great stories of his time in the Middle East. To his family, my sincere sympathies. Theresa Marie (Laffin) Underhill

- Theresa Marie (Laffin) Underhill

What can one say about Dr Alex Gillis? He was a grandfather to the entire IWK community. He was sharp and witty. Kind and yet direct when needed. He expected you to do your job and do it well and do it now. However, it's not surprising that he wanted to slip away quietly without funeral or fanfare. Handsome and well dressed - especially recognized by we ladies in the office for his beautiful shirts. He always looked put together and cared for at home - which he was. I remember when the IWK was going through a rocky time and a full house had gathered in the then O.E. Smith auditorium worried and concerned about the future. Alex addressed the crowd and truly calmed and rallied us. After giving an account of the turn of events, he explained that he had agreed to take on the responsibilities of leadership as temporary CEO (probably for a year or better) despite being quite up in years at the time. We knew then that we would be ok. That he would take care of us. Then he said with some fervor "It will take more than this to topple the IWK". Well some of us from the IWK are a bit wobbly with this news about you, Alex. It was an honour to have known you. ζ

- Angie Davidson

Dear Judy and all Alex's family, Please accept my sincere condolences on the passing of Alex. He was such a kind, caring and capable man and always understated. His humble obituary is so much like man he was. Alex touched many lives and made the world a better place. My thoughts are with you Judy and all the family at this time of loss. Sincerely, Linda Smith

- Linda Smith

Judy and Alex's entire family. I am so sorry to read of his passing. Such a lovely man and kind physician and surgeon. Judy, I am immensely sorry for your loss. Darlene Boliver

- Darlene Boliver

Judy and the Gillis Family, We were saddened to hear of Alex's passing and send our condolences to all of you. We will remember him as a wonderful colleague and friend as well as for his kindness and compassion for others and love of his family. Thinking of you all at this time, Janet and Gerard Knox

- Janet and Gerard Knox

A legend has passed. I learnt so much from him as a resident and fellow. He was instrumental in drawing me towards pediatric surgery. He will be deeply missed. He was one of founding members of CAPS but was seen by many as one of their Mentors. Condolences, Judy, from Mark and Helene

- J Mark Walton

Dear Judy I cannot express how much I know you and all of us will miss Alex. He was so incredibly devoted to caring for the children of the Maritimes, both during and after his professional career. He was a role model extraordinaire. I still remember him giving me practice oral exams when I arrived at the IWK to start my career. Then and so many times after, his passion for pediatric surgery shone so brightly through. Even moreso, his love of life and of you and your family beamed. The world is a better place for having known Alex. Natalie

- Natalie Yancher

Dear Judy, I was very sorry to hear of Alex's passing and am sending you and the family sincerest condolences. Alex demonstrated the highest level of leadership and commitment to proving the very best service whether in clinical care or administration. He was a true model for all who had the good fortune of working for and with him. I raise a glass in his honour when I next get to swing a club at Highland Links this summer. Sincerely, Brian MacDougall

- Brian MacDougall

I met Alex when I was appointed President and CEO of the IWK in 2005. He had been acting ably in that role during the recruitment process, and welcomed me by making sure I had a smooth transition. He knew the IWK from many perspectives, not the least of which was his indelible mark on Pediatric surgery, but beyond that he understood, and was a student of, the complexities of running a large health centre. Some would say that he "crossed over to the dark side" when he contributed his administrative skills for many years after he passed over his surgical tools to his many mentees. In my view, his compassion, analytic thinking, sense of irony and humour, came from his respect for children and their families- all of whom adored him. A highlight of our time together came when we went to Toronto (Bay St. no less), to meet with a potential donor who we hoped would contribute to a new child and youth mental health unit. Alex was the star of that show and soon established a relationship with the Garron family. He spoke of the need for mental health services with intimate knowledge, leaving me thinking that if surgery hadn't worked out he could have been a psychiatrist- or any specialty! We came away with 10 million dollars, and in my view the Garron Unit exists today because of Alex. He was the perfect combination of fiercely intelligent, a great judge of character, dedication, and a work ethic that probably only rarely exists today. He meant so much to so many.

- Anne McGuire

Judy. It saddens me to hear of a man I admired and who humbly mentored me personally on the path I find myself today. Dr. Gillis was a man many wanted to mimic. A gentleman surgeon. Leaving this world quietly while leaving such an impact is so very Alex.

- Guy Brisseau

My sincerest condolences to all of Alex' family. I am saddened to hear of his passing, someone I deeply admired and loved. He was my mentor and role model, and it was an honour and great privilege to have been associated with him. It was a pleasure to have been introduced to many of his family, and a distinct pleasure to have known and admired Judy. It is so Alex, arguably one of a very small

handful of Dalhousie's great sons, to ask to be allowed to leave quietly. Good bye, Alex. Mike Giacomantonio

- Mike Giacomantonio

d Dear Judy, On July 1 1969 I arrived at the old Halifax Childrens Hospital to begin my career in Surgery . With a combination of respect and terror I began my long association with Alex who became my mentor , colleague and friend . It is difficult to express how much influence he had on me suffice to say it was huge . He was a giant yet never deviating from the values he held so strongly and always remaining humble when surrounded by his many accomplishments . A casual reader of his obituary would not grasp the enormity of his career. It was for me a wonderful experience to share our time at the IWK . His richly deserved Order of Canada defines his place as a great Canadian as well as a superb Physician and Surgeon . I know he found great comfort in the love you shared . May he rest in Peace

- john (Joe) hyndman