



## Keith Forrest Telfer

December 30, 2025

Keith's life was long and well-lived. He enjoyed a bustling family life and was guided by lots of strong interests. He met his future wife, Rose, when he was calling square dances in his teens. When Keith took up bee-keeping, it was Rose who was stung by them when Keith went to the Bahamas for a year to help his uncle – a bronze sculptor – homestead on an island and set up a studio there. When Keith returned to Canada, he and Rose married and he went to agricultural college. On their farm near Woodstock, Rose and Keith welcomed their first two children, Becky and Jeff. Among all of the other work of farming, Keith once carried all of the 80-pound milk cans into the basement and up again so they wouldn't freeze and he and Rose could still get their milk money. Rose and Keith put their hearts and souls into the farm but after years of living hand-to-milk as it were, they decided to make a change. Keith went to teachers' college and became a science teacher in the 1960s, later working for the Ministry as a superintendent of education. During the 'Scarborough Years' Keith and Rose had two more children, Chris and Geordie.

Keith loved to go fast in the natural world. He downhill ski-ed into his mid eighties and likewise sailed the blue waters of Georgian Bay, with whatever boat he was steering heeled so far over that water sluiced over the leeward gunwale. He did both of these until he no longer could. And about the boats – Keith was an inveterate sailor, paddler, and rower. He had a t-shirt with the famous quote from Ratty in Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*:

“there is nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.” At one time his children counted six boats at the cottage, ranging from from a leaky rowboat made from non-marine plywood to a mahogany launch to a 23-foot fibreglass sailboat.

Keith was also a builder and maker of things. Whether he was turning a salad-bowl or making a crib for a grandchild or building multi-room additions on to the cottage, he loved to make things. He was also a community builder; after they lost Becky, Rose and Keith volunteered at Wellspring, a cancer support centre in downtown Toronto. Rose did peer support and reiki, with Keith building a vibrant class of meditation and yoga students. He had become interested in yoga when he retired in the late '80s and it was an important activity for him as he moved into his sixties.

His surviving family – Rose, Jeff, Chris and Geordie – are sad of course, but he did have a remarkably full run. Not everyone makes it to 95. Best to remember him as he lived, wind-blown on the water, squinting into the sun, sailing into his next adventure.

# Tribute Wall

EL

“ Please accept my sincere condolences on the death of Keith. Twenty years ago or longer ago, my mother and stepfather found great comfort in the meditation classes that Keith led at Wellspring on the grounds of Sunnybrook Hospital. They shared with me many times that Keith and Rose had helped them through a very difficult time. Sincerely, Elizabeth Fairley

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**Elizabeth** - January 08 at 07:39 AM

MP

Marc and I send our sincere condolences and great love to Rose and family. We have many, many fond memories of happy times together at Wellspring, at Camp Renewal, building a canoe and getting together as much as possible.  
Sending a big hug to Rose.  
Love Marny and Marc Pearsall

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**Marny Pearsall** - January 08 at 08:57 AM

HM

Rose and family, Keith was a great person and Rose and Keith made a great couple. We still miss them since they left Scarborough as they had been our neighbours for such a long time.  
Best regards Rose.  
Love Helen and Jim.

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**helen malone** - January 08 at 09:12 AM