Balfour Mount

1939-2025

Montreal, Quebec, September 29, 2025. We are deeply saddened to announce the death of Dr. Bal Mount. Dr. Mount died in the very unit named to honour his profound contribution to the development of palliative care: The Balfour Mount Palliative Care Unit of the Royal Victoria Hospital, in Montreal.

Fifty years ago in 1975, Dr. Mount launched the world's first Palliative Care Unit and Service in Montreal, a groundbreaking initiative that became the template for global practice. Widely acknowledged as the "father" of palliative care, Dr Mount coined the term 'Palliative Care' to designate this novel combination of British hospice, American thanatology and Canadian academic medicine.

According to Dr. John Scott, President, Canadian Society of Palliative Medicine, "*Dr Balfour Mount, in creating the discipline of Palliative Care, revolutionized the management of life-limiting illness in Canada and far beyond. He demonstrated that whole person care can allow us to live fully until we die. By shaping the philosophy and symptom relief tools of palliative care, Dr Mount has made an enormous impact on the total burden of pain and suffering around the world.*"

Dr. Mount's influence on the development of palliative care is wide reaching. He was the founding Director of the Royal Victoria Hospital Palliative Care Service, Palliative Care McGill, and the McGill Programs in Integrated Whole Person Care. He was the founding President of the Canadian Society of Palliative Medicine (CSPM). He served as the Eric M. Flanders Emeritus Professor of Palliative Care at McGill University. In 1985, he was made a Member of the Order of Canada in recognition of "having founded the first Palliative Care Service at Montreal's Royal Victoria Hospital." In 2003, he was promoted to Officer in recognition of being "the father of palliative care in North America." In 1988, he

was made an Officer of the National Order of Quebec. Dr. Mount's leadership and vision extended to teaching, research and patient care.

Dr. Justin Sanders, Kappy and Eric M. Flanders Chair of Palliative Medicine at McGill University, notes: "*In the tradition of medicine's greatest physicians, Dr. Mount challenged us to recognize the importance of building healing connections with people in their most vulnerable phases of life and illness. He put forward the radical idea that healing – a sense of integrity and transformational growth – was possible even as we die. Fifty years of palliative care research have proven the importance of these ideas in ensuring the best patient care; also, perhaps unexpectedly, that they hold the key to our clinicians' and health systems' sustainability.*"

We, at Palliative Care McGill (PCM), McGill University, and the Canadian Society of Palliative Medicine (CSPM), acknowledge, with profound gratitude, his seminal contributions to the science, philosophy, and art of our discipline. PCM and CSPM will soon share a fuller portrait of his life and legacy. We extend our condolences to his wife, family, colleagues, friends and all those grieving his loss.

For more information, visit https://www.mcgill.ca/palliativecare/ or https://www.pallmed.ca/

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