

Richard Harris Tobias
June 1, 1950 - May 18, 2022

Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, Toronto
11 am, June 15, 2022

*He defended the cause of the poor and needy
and so all went well. "Is that not what it means
to know me? declares the Lord.*

– Jeremiah 22:1

From the Hearts of Family

A Practitioner of Justice *Jeremy Tobias, son*

For a guy that didn't finish high school, Dad sure had a lot of degrees. After receiving one of his honorary doctorates he remarked, "Not bad for a high school dropout!"

Dad once said that he wasn't an academic, he was a practitioner. I'm not sure how true the first part is, but it's true that he was a practitioner - a practitioner of justice.

Justice wasn't just something Dad believed in, it was something he sought to manifest in the world through action. I also heard Dad refer to himself from the pulpit as "an old hippie," but unlike so many of his generation, Dad never cut his hair, never gave up on his ideals. He always believed that justice could be obtained in the world.

Throughout his career with Yonge Street Mission, I was always impressed with Dad's practicality. I admired him for choosing paths that offered a practical benefit to the communities the Mission served.

He told me that once he got some pushback about accepting a donation from someone whose business dealings made some at the Mission uncomfortable. Dad's tongue-in-cheek response was "The Devil's had that money long enough. We'll do something good with it."

In the late '80s Dad opened a muffin shop on Yonge Street to teach street kids to become employable. The muffin shop would operate as a business, not because the Mission needed the money, but because those were the skills those kids needed. And for a time, some of the best muffins in town were served up by homeless teenagers and punk rockers on Yonge Street.

Around that same time Dad fielded complaints from landlords and shop owners about the negative impact of homeless street kids on Yonge Street. His response was always the same - if they were worried about their businesses, maybe they should clean up their store fronts!

I'm not sure I agree, however, with my father's sentiment that he wasn't an academic. In many ways he had the soul of a writer, and he was a wonderful speaker and lecturer. He mined popular culture for anything he could use to teach others about justice. As a preacher and a teacher, he was as likely to quote from Bob Dylan as St. Paul.

Friends and colleagues repeatedly challenged him to leave a written legacy of all he was preaching from a pulpit, and teaching in his classes. Yet I simply think he never saw that as his legacy. His legacy would be found in the people he left behind and in the lives he changed. It would be found in the relationships he forged with community members, business leaders, politicians, churches, and donors; anyone he could enlist in service of his vision for justice in the city.

Writing about my father as a practitioner of justice is easy but writing about him as a father and a man is harder. He was a wonderful father. Yet I find it difficult to capture, in a meaningful way, all those moments that would convey to others what he meant to us all. It's difficult mostly because, as my mother says, he was never just one thing. He was a bunch of wonderfully contradictory things, and human in ways his towering legacy seems to defy.

Right now, I find myself unable to meet the task of writing about my father the man. Instead, on the occasion of his death, I am drawn to familiar passages from the book of Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes is by far my favourite book of the Bible. I find it refreshing in its lack of easy answers for tough questions. And

while Ecclesiastes 3:1-9 (beloved of both weddings and funerals) may feel a touch clichéd, the sentiment and structure seem fitting for my Dad. He was a man who was many different and contradictory things and a man of many seasons. I also think the fact that this passage was recorded by The Byrds (among others) would appeal to the old hippie and music lover in him. In what follows I paraphrase Ecclesiastes in ways that will mostly make sense only to the family and would have made Dad smile.

From Ecclesiastes

(abridged and paraphrased)

The words of the preacher...

For everything there is a season,

and a time for every purpose under heaven.

A time to be born and a time to die;

a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

a time to weep and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn and a time to dance;

a time for the peace of the Abby and a time for the thunder of motorcycles;

a time for the banging of drums and a time for the plucking of harps;

a time for *The Rain Song* and a time for the song of a chickadee;

a time for faded blue jeans and a time for smart haberdashery;

a time for Yonge Street and a time for King's Square;

a time for peaceful meditation and prayer;

a time for hamburgers and fries and a time for raw kibbee and mint;

a time for old hippies and a time for young punk rockers;

a time for bankers and a time for bikers;

a time to seek justice and a time to receive grace;

a time for *You can't always get what you want* and a time for *sometimes you get what you need*;

a time to *Get your motor runnin'* [and] *Head out on the highway* and a time for *Oh, Mama, can this really be the end? To be stuck inside of Mobile with the Memphis blues again*;

a time to *seek the heart of life* and a time to *know the secret of death*;

a time to *try for the sun* and a time to *bid you goodnight... goodnight...goodnight...*



Jeremy (son), James (son) and Rick, toasting the new year, 2022

I'm Still Learning Too *Janna Brown, niece*

Uncle Rick's presence in my life resists categories. He stepped into a place where there was absence and there he remained.

We had a long-standing agreement that if we were going out, I had to choose what to do. This meant he found himself at all kinds of movies, live music, the odd poetry reading and many cafés. It also meant he showed me my voice mattered. Whether we were out for gelato or a cup of coffee, as our conversations unfolded, so did I. He nicknamed me "Chickadee" and it stuck.

About 15 years ago, my reserves were empty with regards to spirituality and faith. On a particular anniversary, a day we called Jubilee, we celebrated by going to the butterfly conservatory and having Persian food at College and Bathurst. He also gave me a rosary. I would find solace in the prayers as I carried it with me. It was steady. I thought of stories he had shared about his Siti and how she made prayers between baking batches of mountain bread. I sometimes imagine his grandmother's warm kitchen and the rhythm of ancient rites as I make my own contemplations.

I asked Uncle Rick many questions. During our last visit he said, "I'm almost 72 years old, Chickadee. I'm still learning." His love gives me peace and the knowledge that I'm still learning too.



Janna and Rick

A Position He Holds to This Day *Paul Brown, brother-in-law*

I have known Rick from my early teens. I was a book-smart, socially awkward oldest son of a strict Baptist family. Rick was a street-smart, charismatic oldest son of a Lebanese merchant. By 1960s standards, Rick was incredibly cool, and I wasn't. He was my hero and I wanted to be more like him.

I hung around with Rick until 1969 when I moved to Boston to attend university. In the year before I moved, Rick and I were *de facto* leaders of TNT (Teens Night Together), a Friday evening drop-in center started by Pastor Bob Berry at Forest Hills Baptist Church. Rick and I both found our Christian calling there. Rick also found my sister.

It took me a couple of years to come to grips with Rick's amazing transformation and to fully accept him as my brother-in-law, but I did. It was not long before Rick was my hero again, a position he holds to this day.

Rick had a calling to make the world a better place. He saved lives and souls. I was always amazed at Rick's practicality, his sense of justice and of the possible. He brought his teenaged charisma into adulthood becoming influential in so many lives by listening, persuading, and quietly convincing people and corporations to give their time, energy, and money to helping the disenfranchised.

He had strong theological and pragmatic ideas that focused on addressing the root causes of poverty, as well as the immediate needs. He was a great teacher who challenged his students. I remember so many great conversations where Rick would test his amazingly progressive and pragmatic ideas for empowering people with skills and opportunities and hope.

For all his brilliance, his empathy, and his influence, what I most admired was his pragmatism in addressing the needs of his

clients. When I lived in Toronto, I regularly encountered panhandlers as I walked to the office. I wanted to give them money but felt I would be merely feeding their habits. I asked Rick for advice. He told me that he wouldn't give me advice but would tell me what he did. He said that when he was walking the streets, he carried a roll of coins that he would give to any panhandler he encountered. I asked him if he wasn't afraid that he was feeding their addiction. He smiled and said that it wasn't his job to determine what they did with the money; it was his responsibility to do good with his money. Jesus called him to give, and he did so unconditionally.

Rick has earned his place in heaven, and I look forward to seeing him soon, unencumbered by the physical limitations he suffered with here.

I love you, brother!



From left: Jeremy, Jana, Charis, Alicia, James and Rick

The Unexpected Joy of the Ordinary *Dan Kirk, brother-in-law* *(inspired by author Catherine Gray)*

I first met Rick in 2011 as I became a member of a newly blended family that included him. Rick and I were born in the same year, Saint John's by background, and travelled the same streets, and went to the same high school at the same time.

But when we met as adults, his biker look, long hair, and earrings were not in my normal comfort range! And I was intimidated by his reputation as a scholar, leader, free thinker, and free spirit.

Yet in the decade since, I observed Rick as a quiet, deep thinker, and a gentle giant in the world. He was an empathetic bear; empathy was his default in dealing with everyone he met.

He understood that more money did not result in a permanent increase in happiness. He never got on the success treadmill (and seldom on any other treadmill - when it came to workouts, Rick did not walk that road!)

Rick was able to disconnect and knew how important it is to let go, that you don't have 'to be on' all the time. He did not seek attention. Rather, he was sought out ... 'with humility comes wisdom' (Proverbs 11:2 NLT)

I also observed that Rick found unexpected joy in the small things in life, and he responded with gratitude. So much of what Rick was grateful for was, well, rather ordinary. Yet the joy was obvious.

Thank you, Rick, for allowing me to share some space with you on this Earth even for a short time.

Memorial Service

Prelude Music Team

Lighting the candle Paul Tobias and Denise Jamael Tobias

Welcome Larry Matthews

Steppin' Out of Babylon (video) TC3
The Rev. Denise Gillard

Remembrances of Rick

Memories of a brother Stephen Tobias

From the family A video reminiscence
Harp accompaniment by Charis
Angel's Wings (Kristine Warmhold, composer)

Through the eyes of friends Larry Matthews

Return Again Music Team

*Return again, Return again
Return to the land of your soul
Return again, Return again
Return to the land of your soul*

*Return to who you are, return to what you are
Return to where you are Born and reborn again*

*Return to who you are, return to what you are
Return to where you are Born and reborn again....born again*

*Return again, Return again
Return to the land of your soul
Return again, Return again
Return to the land of your soul*

*Return to who you are, return to what you are
Return to where you are Born and reborn again*

*Return to who you are, return to what you are
Return to where you are Born and reborn again*

Interlude

*Return to who you are, return to what you are
Return to where you are Born and reborn again
Born again, oob oob oob*

*Return to the land of your soul
Return again, Return again
Return to the land of your soul*



*Rick with his brothers.
From the left: Randy, Rick, Stephen and Paul Tobias*

A Journey from the Heart of Rick

The Prayer of Saint Francis

Please stand and read in unison.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

A Prayer for Justice

“There are about a thousand references in Scripture to the poor. There are another thousand verses that speak about justice and the call to justice. And there are another thousand verses that speak of injustice, of the reign of injustice over the land and its impact on people. Now 3,000 verses are about equal in content to the whole of the Gospels. It was the weight of Scripture given to the topic that caused me to think I need to keep moving in this direction.” – RT, 2022

Deuteronomy 15:4-5;7-8 Eli Freedman (*reading in Hebrew*)
Deuteronomy 15:10-11 Bob Graham

Prayer The Rev. Dr. Karen Bach

Music Team (*instrumental*)



A Prayer for Inclusion

“Embrace and inclusion, for me, represent the highest manifestation of our aspiration to be a just society. We can do many things to pursue that aspiration but for me, the acid test of justice actualized is embrace: Do we belong to each other? Are we a people together? Are we inclusive?” – RT, 2016

Galatians 3:28; Philippians 2:3-4 Dr. Cheryl Bear
James 2:1-5 The Rev. Dr. John Joseph Mastandrea

Prayer Dion Oxford

Prayer Song Dr. Cheryl Bear



A Prayer for the Poor

“Seeing the poor as precious is not as easy as feeling pity or being generous. Seeing need and feeling some responsibility leads me to give of my wealth and maybe my time. But seeing the poor as precious, as a national treasure, that’s hard. Such vision would force me to act accordingly, to invest in their lives more sacrificially than I care to imagine. And the same vision would force us as a nation to place the needs of the poor at the forefront of our national agenda.” – RT, 2006

Matthew 25:31-40 The Rev. Erinn Oxford and Peter Lamb

Prayer The Rev. Bill Ryan

All God’s Children Music Team

*All God’s children gonna sing some day
All God’s children gonna sing
Tell everybody who has lost their way
All God’s children gonna sing*

*Sing for the angels, Sing for the sinners
All of the losers one day will be winners*

*“Cause all God’s children gonna sing some day
All God’s children gonna sing
Tell everybody who gone astray
All God’s children gonna sing*

*Sing for the homeless ones lost in desperation
Sing for the lonely ones searching for salvation
“Cause all God’s children gonna sing some day
All God’s children gonna sing
Tell everybody who has lost their way
All God’s children gonna sing*

(continued on next page)

*Sing for the nameless ones hungry and downhearted
Sing so the peacemakers can finish what they started*

*“Cause all God’s children gonna sing some day
All God’s children gonna sing
Tell everybody who has lost their way
All God’s children gonna sing*

*All God’s children gonna sing some day
All God’s children gonna sing
Tell everybody who has lost their way
All God’s children gonna sing*



A Prayer for the Safety of Children

“Until we can correct the social evils which cause youth to take to the streets or until we can find, and fund, better alternatives for them, we must be gracious and generous in all our dealings with them. Any revitalized city must make room for all its people, rich and poor alike.” - RT, 1998

Psalm 72:4; Matthew 19:14 Stephanie McMahon
Matthew 18:2-6 Miller Alloway

Prayer Angie Peters

Music Team (*instrumental*)



A Prayer for Peace

“What could be more counter-cultural in this age than loving one’s enemies? Yet Jesus’ word does not falter: Love all, even your oppressors, even your enemy. Of course, once you love your enemy, regardless of what they think, they no longer are your enemy. Others may label us enemies, but we are freed from responding in kind. That doesn’t dictate that we never disagree nor argue for our understanding of what is right, just, and true. It does mean that we focus less on defeating an enemy, and more on serving God and reflecting the values, ethics, vision, and high principles that spring from faith.” - RT, 2016

Romans 14:17-19 Janna Brown

James 3:17-18; Jeremiah 29:7 Jeremy Tobias

Prayer The Rev. Wendell Gibbs

May God Love You Like You’ve Never Been Loved Before
Music Team

*With the darkness surely falling, may I propose a toast?
Is it sacrilegious dancing in the light of all we’ve lost?
Open and woundable, Good evening, I’m your host
May God love you like you’ve never been loved*

*Is your heart beating sadness, the longest goodbye yet?
Share your bruises on my body, that’s as close as we can get
I’ll never say I’m sorry for offering respect
May God love you like you’ve never been loved*

*There is no land of promise here
There’s only wilderness
You may not recognize this place
You live here nonetheless*

*There are no wise men traveling, there is no gift to bring
But if you welcome home a child
You’ve thrown your hat into the ring
We’re not curable, but we’re treatable
And that’s why I still sing*

*May God love you like you’ve never been loved
May God love you like you’ve never been loved*

*May God love you like you’ve never been loved
May God love you like you’ve never been loved*



A Prayer for Unity

“We live in a time when we are fed numerous bogus and destructive choices which keep us distracted and unfocused, unable or unprepared to seek out fresh solutions to deeply rooted social issues. I don’t believe it is always intentional. But intentionally duped or not, like the victims of a magician’s misdirection, we’re looking in the wrong places for our answers and solutions.

“Watching our current leaders, both secular and faith-based, cluster in camps and hammer away at each other saddens me. The manufacturing and enforcing of divisions are the very opposite of the unity we so desperately require. We as a people, must refuse to buy into the divisions offered us by so-called, often self-appointed leaders: we must out-think the retailers of binary options which are currently being put before us in so many highly-charged realms” – RT, 2016

John 17:22; Matthew 12:25; Mark 9:38

James Tobias and Alicia Tobias

Prayer The Rev. Greg Paul

Music Team *(instrumental)*

A Prayer of Gratitude

“Truly they understood that giving, thanking, and gratitude are all connected at the root. We serve the same God as the mendicants of old. And like them, we are grateful to God, because we are allowed to live among people we love and among people who so tangibly bestow their love on us. I’m so glad you are part of it.” – RT, 2011

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; James 1:17 Jesse Surdigo
Philippians 4:6-7 The Rev. David Adcock

Prayer Alana Walker Carpenter

Take Care of all of My Children Music Team

*Oh, take care of all of God’s children
Don’t let ‘em wander and roam
Oh, take care of all of God’s children
For I don’t know when I’m comin’ back home*

*You can put all of my possessions here in Jesus’ name
Nail a sign on the door
Bright and early Sunday morning with my walking cane
I’m going up to see my Lord*

*Oh, keep them together at the sundown
Safe from the Devil’s hand
You gotta make them a pillow on the hard ground
I’ll be goin’ up to Beulah land*

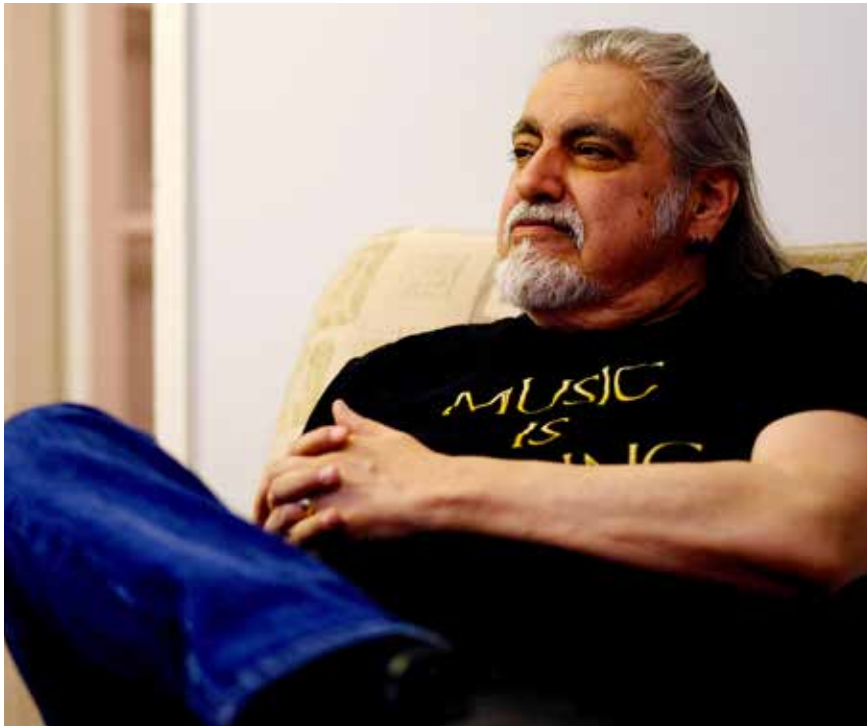
*You can put all of my possessions here in Jesus’ name
And nail a sign on the door
Bright and early Sunday morning with my walking cane
I’m going up to see my Lord*

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*Oh remember you never trust the Devil
Stay clear of Lucifer's hand
Oh and don't let 'em wander in the meadow
Or you'll wind up in the fryin' pan*

*You can put all of my possessions here in Jesus' name
And nail a sign on the door
Bright and early Sunday morning with my walking cane
I'm going up to see my Lord*

*Put all of my possessions here in Jesus' name
And nail a sign on the door
Bright and early Sunday morning with my walking cane
I'm going up to see my Lord*



An Invitation to Advocacy

Please stand for the reading of Scripture

James 1:27, Jeremiah 22:16, Isaiah 1:17 Norm Allen

Reflection, Encouragement & Exhortation

The Rev. Dr. Peter Holmes

Will You Come and Follow Me (The Summons) Music Team

The congregation please rise and sing

*Will you come and follow Me
If I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
And never be the same?
Will you let My love be shown
Will you let My name be known
Will you let My life be grown
In you and you in Me?*

*Will you leave yourself behind
If I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
And never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
Should your life attract or scare
Will you let Me answer prayer
In you and you in Me?*

*Will you let the blinded see
If I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
And never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean*

(continued on next page)

*And do such as this unseen
And admit to what I mean
In you and you in Me?*

*Will you love the you you hide
If I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
And never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
To reshape the world around
Through My sight and touch and sound
In you and you in Me?*

*Lord Your summons echoes true
When You but call my name.
Let me turn and follow You
And never be the same.
In Your company I'll go
Where Your love and footsteps show
Thus I'll move and live and grow
In You and You in me.*



Our Farewell

Benediction The Rev. Dr. Peter Holmes

I Bid You Goodnight Music Team
(Soweto Gospel Choir lyrics)

*Lay down my dear brother, Lay down and take your rest
I wanna lay your head, Upon your Saviour's breast
I love you, but Jesus loves you best
I bid you good night (good night), goodnight (good night),
I bid you good night (good night), good night (good night),*

*One of these mornings. Bright and early in the sun
Good night (good night)
While they're picking up the Spirit to the shore beyond
Good night (good night)
Go walking in the Valley of the Shadow of Death
Good night (good night)*

*His rod and staff gonna comfort me
Good night (good night, goodnight)
Join the wild, sing a song and say
Good night (good night, goodnight)*

*Lord send fire not a flood next time
Good night (goodnight), Good night,
I remember right well, I remember right well
I went walking in Jerusalem just like John
Good night (goodnight), Good night,*

*Lay down my dear brother, Lay down and take your rest
I wanna lay your head, Upon your Saviour's breast
I love you, but Jesus loves you best
I bid you good night (good night), goodnight (good night),
I bid you good night (good night), good night (good night)...*

Thank you

With a special thanks to the Music Team

Matthew Parker – *Music Director*

Barbara Parker – *Voice*

Debra Downey – *Voice*

Jared Parker – *Bass Guitar*

Craig Parkinson – *Drums*

Wayne Brewer – *Keyboards, horns, congas*

Mark Thornley – *Guitar*

William Elson – *Sound Engineer*

Thank you to our featured vocalists

The Rev. Denise Gillard is founder and Executive Artistic Director of The HopeWorks Connection, and its flagship program, The Toronto Children's Concert Choir & Performing Arts Company (TC3).

Dr. Cheryl Bear, from Nadleh Whut'en First Nation, is a mother, grandmother, singer, songwriter, and storyteller.

Thank you to participating family

Stephen Tobias – *brother, Saint John, NB*

Paul Tobias and Denise Jamael Tobias – *brother and sister-in-law, Saint John, NB*

Jeremy Tobias – *son, Toronto*

James Tobias – *son, Toronto*

Alicia Tobias – *daughter-in-law, Toronto*

Janna Brown – *niece, Saint John, NB*

Thank you to Yorkminster Park Baptist Church for generously donating use of the sanctuary. Thank you also to the greeters, ushers, caretaker, sound technician, and facility managers of the church.

Thank you to participating friends

Eli Freedman – *businessperson and member of Los Silverados*

Bob Graham – *retired business and executive recruitment consultant, and founder of Los Silverados*

The Rev. Dr. Karen Bach – *former Vice President at YSM, retired*

The Rev. Dr. John Joseph Mastandrea – *Minister, Manor Road United Church*

Dion Oxford – *Spiritual Director and founding Director of Salvation Army Gateway (retired)*

The Rev. Erinn Oxford – *Executive Director and Pastor, The Dale Ministries*

Peter Lamb – *community member, The Dale Ministries*

The Rev. Bill Ryan – *Voca Consulting, former senior leader at Yonge Street Mission*

Miller Alloway – *President, Maranatha Foundation*

Angie Peters – *CEO, Yonge Street Mission*

The Rev. Wendell Gibbs – *Pastor, First Baptist Church, Toronto*

The Rev. Greg Paul – *founder and pastor of Sanctuary Toronto*

Jesse Sudirgo – *Director of the M.Div. Church in the City, Tyndale Seminary*

The Rev. David Adcock – *CEO, ERDO; former Vice President at Yonge Street Mission*

Alana Walker Carpenter – *CEO, Intriciti*

Norm Allen – *Executive Director, Touchstone Ministries*

Thank you to our organizers and hosts

The Rev. Dr. J. Peter Holmes – *Minister of the Congregation Yorkminster Park Baptist Church*

Stephanie McMahon – *Ceremony Coordinator*

Larry Matthews – *Master of Ceremonies*

David King – *Inline Digital Communications – audio, video, webcast*

Obituary



The death of Dr. Richard (Rick) Harris Tobias occurred on May 18, 2022 at Michael Garron Hospital in Toronto, where he was surrounded by family at the end of a difficult struggle with cancer. He was 71.

The oldest child of Raymond and Doris Tobias, Rick was born in Saint John, NB where he attended public school, and was married to Charis Brown of Saint John in 1973.

Rick is survived by Charis, who lives in Toronto; sons, Jeremy Tobias (Jana Lacova) of Toronto, and James Tobias (Alicia), of Toronto; two grandchildren, Arya and Archer; his mother Doris Tobias of Saint John, NB; and brothers Paul Tobias (Denise Jamael Tobias), Randy Tobias (Lori Martin) and Stephen Tobias (Sandra Donnelly), all of Saint John; and several nieces and nephews. Rick was predeceased by his father Raymond in 2019.

After early studies at what is now Crandall University in Moncton, Rick earned Bachelor of Arts and Master of Divinity degrees at Acadia University and Acadia Divinity College. During his studies he ministered in church planting in Coldbrook, NS, and founded Baptist Inner-City Ministries in Saint John. After completing his M. Div., he was the first staff member of an urban education program in Halifax.

As part of his master's degree, Rick earned the Certificate in Urban Pastoral Ministry from the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education in Chicago IL. Those studies and his experience as a pastoral intern in Chicago laid the foundation for 40 years of study

and action on poverty, community, and justice.

In 1983 Rick became Director of the Evergreen Centre for Street Youth at The Yonge Street Mission (YSM) in Toronto, eventually becoming CEO of YSM in 1989. Under his innovative leadership, YSM was transformed into a leading urban ministry in North America. In 2012, after 23 years as CEO, he took on a new role as Community Advocate, and then retired in 2020.

Built on a platform of faith and study, Rick's public role was infused by his insight and passion. He invested in the next generation of leadership as a mentor to many, including during 25 years of teaching at Tyndale University College and Seminary. As a speaker, teacher, and consultant, his impact was felt among business and religious leaders, churchgoers and secular audiences, students and scholars, and social service managers and front-line workers.

Over time Rick became one of Canada's best-known advocates for people whose lives are constrained by poverty and injustice. His credibility was earned through front-line experience and innovative leadership and he inspired thousands with a vision for lasting change.

Rick received many significant awards. The most visible were the Leadership Award (Crandall University, 2000); Honourary Doctor of Divinity (McMaster University (2003); Honourary Degree (Humber College, 2009); Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012); honorary Doctor of Laws (York University, 2012); and honorary Doctor of Divinity (Acadia University, 2017.)

Rick prized his family. He took great pride in the personal and professional accomplishments of his sons Jeremy and James but even more in their character and that of their partners. His grandchildren were a source of pure delight and joy. Meanwhile he spoke so often of Charis, and of her work as a visual artist, that many friends felt they knew her before they met her.

He nurtured his inner life, exploring personal spirituality through reading and retreats, and immersing himself in an astonishing range of music, crossing generations, geography, and genre.

Since his 40th birthday, his great escape was always on two wheels. For Rick, motorcycling cleared his mind and brought him joy, and led to treasured friendships.

Throughout two decades of challenging medical issues and the fight with cancer that took him, he was surrounded by his supportive and loving family, and lifted up by a diverse and far-flung network of friends.

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As well as being grateful to extended family and friends, the family wishes to thank the many medical professionals who provided such exemplary care over many years, and, on more than one occasion, literally saved Rick's life.

Rick became an example of what he had always proclaimed, that a strong community has the power to bind wounds, comfort those who suffer, and inspire people's hearts. Certainly, he was comforted and inspired by a community of support for which he and his family were very grateful.



For those so inclined Rick asked that gifts be made directly to one of the following charities:

In Toronto

Yonge Street Mission (*Please designate the Grace and Goodness Trust established in Rick's honour upon his retirement.*)

<https://www.ysm.ca/>

The Dale Ministries (*attn. Erinn Oxford*)

<https://www.thedale.org/>

The HopeWorks Connection (*Home of TC3 (attn. Denise Gillard)*)

<https://emii.ca/thwc?give>

In New Brunswick

Saint John Theatre Company

<https://saintjohntheatrecompany.com/>

Sistema NB/New Brunswick Youth Orchestra

<https://sistemanb.ca/>

(Sistema can also accept used orchestral instruments.

To inquire, email info@nbyo-ojnb.com)

Outflow: Saint John

<https://outflowsj.com/>