



James Adam Craig

Jim Craig died in November 2011, finally felled by the prostate cancer he had managed to hold off for 18 years. Most of us remember him as a quiet, unpretentious, sole practitioner who ran an efficient solicitor's practice in Vancouver for 33 years. Jim's forebears were ethnic Germans, originally from Alsace Lorraine, with the surname of Bauer, though the family

had lived for some generations in Hungary. Jim's parents and his older brother emigrated from Hungary not long after the end of the First World War and settled on a farm in a small town called Sangudo, near Edmonton, where Jim was born on October 17, 1924. The family homesteaded on a quarter section of land. Jim started school in Sangudo, and it was not until then that he began to speak English. His native tongue was Hungarian.

Jim did not experience a regular, steady, conventional childhood. His parent's union had been an arranged marriage. When they settled in Alberta, his father worked in the mines in the winter and eventually his mother grew weary of life on the farm, alone in winter, so she sold it and moved with the two boys to Vancouver, leaving father behind. She decided to change their surname to Craig, as Germans were not popular in Canada in the early 1920s. They settled in the West End of Vancouver. Jim's father eventually discovered where his family had gone and followed them to B.C. He became a paramedic, but was killed in an accident when Jim was 15. Jim left King George High School in grade 10 and found work in the shipyards, then busy

with war work. He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1943, serving as a navigator until the end of the war. He never actually saw active service, getting no further than Prince Edward Island. He had been training as a pilot, but on his first solo test flight, striving for his wings, he overshot the runway and it was deemed advisable to switch him to navigation. He was discharged at the end of the war with the rank of pilot officer.

Jim spent a year hitchhiking around Europe after leaving the air force and then attended UBC, obtaining a B.A. He enrolled in law school and graduated in 1956. He supported his career as a student by working as a faller for a logging company in Alert Bay and as a forester on Vancouver Island.

He articulated to the late Victor Butts, though, strangely, the Law Society file also has him articulated to one J.P. Sargent. Upon his call to the bar in 1957, he set up his own practice in Vancouver, which he ran until his retirement in 1990. His file shows him as being a member of the firm of Goldman, Kemp, Craig and Wener. Nisson Goldman, who is still in practice after 56 years, explains that Jim was not in partnership with the others. They shared both office space and the letterhead. Nisson Goldman remembers him as a skilled solicitor, unpretentiously reliable, with a dry wit and not given to unnecessary small talk. In 1971, on the occasion of the centenary of B.C. joining Confederation, W.A.C. Bennett took it into his head to give Vancouver a present. Built in some secrecy behind a hoarding, it turned out to be a fountain. It still stands spouting water in the courtyard outside the Art Gallery. Then it was the old Courthouse. Jim and I were standing examining this erection one day soon after it was unveiled. Knowing Jim's love of mountaineering, I said "Jim, it might make a challenging ascent." "Yes," he said, "but you'd have to climb the north face."

Jim had two passions: mountaineering and ballet.

Jim was a long-time member of the B.C. Mountaineering Club and served as its president in 1977. In 1961 he was a member of the team that traversed the Cheam Range from Foley to Cheam Peak. In 1962 he was a member of the team that climbed Mt. Waddington, a first for the BCMC. In 1964 he fell and broke his hand during the club camp at Falls River. The peak he fell off was promptly named Mt. Metacarpus, which remains its official name to this day in memory of Jim's maimed hand. A memorable ascent was Mt. Kennedy, in the Yukon. In the summer of 1965, he was the Canadian presence in the American party that included the late Senator Robert Kennedy. The climb was to commemorate the assassination of Robert Kennedy's brother, the President of the United States, in 1963. The peak was named after the late president.

Jim was a long-time member and at one time president of the Vancouver Ballet Society and a member of Norbert Vezak's Western Dance Theatre.

When the Royal Winnipeg Ballet visited Vancouver one year, the Vancouver Ballet Society threw a reception for its members, one of whom, Beverly Barkley, was a member of its corps de ballet. Passing through Winnipeg not long after this, Jim seized the opportunity to look her up. They were married soon after. Beverly says that, instead of a ring, Jim gave her a pair of climbing boots as an engagement present.

Jim led an active life. For some 20 years before his death he owned and tended a cabin on Mt. Hollyburn. He was, at one time, president of the Serra Club and a member of the Newman Club, both Roman Catholic organizations. He became an active member of the board of the Vancouver Community Arts Council and the Asian Arts Council.

Jim leaves his widow, Beverly, three children, William, Patrick and Janine, and two grandchildren.

Jim was one of the unsung heroes of the profession: a steady, competent, reliable, unspectacular sole practitioner, who looked after his clients and steadily built a practice and reputation that was a credit to the profession. As far as is known, he rarely set foot inside a courtroom: he well knew when not to venture into unfamiliar pastures.

David Roberts, Q.C.

