

The OALA is saddened to announce the passing of Nicholas Van Vliet on August 29th 2017. Nick has been a full member of the OALA since January 1973. The Association was notified with details on October 22nd 2017.

Nicholas Van Vliet



With heavy hearts, the family of Nick van Vliet announced that he has been reunited with his late wife Salme. At the age of 85, Nick passed away peacefully in the North York General Hospital on August the 29th, while surrounded by members of his family. He was a beloved brother, father, uncle, grandfather, great grandfather and friend.

Nick was born in Den Haag, Netherlands on July 27th 1932. Throughout his life he never forgot his experiences during his childhood in Holland including the moment that Canadian soldiers marched down his street liberating his family during World War 2. He often spoke of the soldiers who gave him chocolate after years of rationing. A man who treasured his independence, he travelled widely in Europe and Canada before immigrating to Canada in 1952. It was in Canada that he met and married Salme, an immigrant from Finland. They had 5 children; Helena, Sepp, Kim, Ingrid and Astrid.

Nick achieved many successes in his life. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture and a Masters in Environmental Science and taught at Ryerson University and George Brown College. But what Nick was most well-known for around the world was his work in landscape architecture. He designed and supervised massive projects all over the world; from Saudi government projects to the Science centre in Toronto from shopping centres in downtown Brisbane to gardens in Gambia. Among these many ventures he had more experiences than we will ever know and learned more languages than he admitted to.

He was very well respected for his work among his colleagues around the world and so passionate about his work that he worked into his 70s. Throughout his working years, Nick took on many volunteer positions at the OALA including a role on Council and as Chair of the Examining Board. He was inducted to the CSLA College of Fellows in 1980 and was awarded OALA Emeritus member status in 2001. After retirement, Nick continued to support the OALA and often attending social events.

Nick's legacy will live on in the hearts of family, friends and colleagues and in the stunning landscapes he built around the world.

As is OALA's custom, a book will be added to our library and a Memorial tree will be planted at the Guelph Arboretum Wall-Custance Memorial Forest in Nick's name.

Nick's granddaughter, Alix, is working on a life history now. She would appreciate any information on project work undertaken by him. If you might have information to share please contact Alix at: alixcgallop@gmail.com.