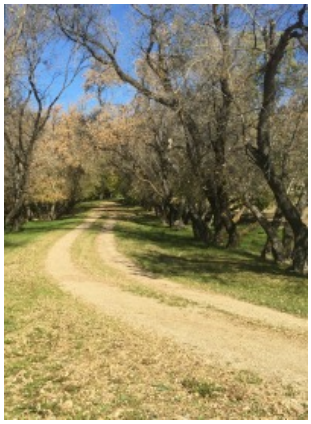

REMEMBERING

George Goertzen

December 2, 1928 - March 6, 2022

George (Gerhard) Goertzen was born on December 2, 1928 in Manitou, Manitoba. Within a few years of his birth, the Goertzen family moved to Fork River Manitoba where George grew up on a farm, about half an hour north of Dauphin. George had a high regard for his family who stayed on the land, but he also felt called elsewhere, even as a young man. He headed first to Briercrest Bible Institute and then west to British Columbia where he eventually graduated in one of UBC's first medical school classes.

George was the last of 8 children. Four older brothers died at an early age, two of them within just a few weeks of each other. His family came out of a time of historic pain and loss, bitterly cold winters, unbroken land, bankruptcies, and clothes stitched from potato sacks. But George's journals were filled with a boylike wonder at everything around him-things that might seem mysterious to us now. There were pages of details about what he discovered through the beehives he tended as a child. There were fond memories of horses he knew by name, and quirky people, and sleighs in the winter, and games played around a wood stove and muddy rivers to swim in. He recounted the hard years faithfully but dwelled in the joy and excitement of what was good around him-a quality he took with him throughout his life.

George and Kay (Enns) met in 1947 while in their second year at Briercrest Bible Institute. Four years later on July 7, 1951, they were married in a Mennonite Brethren Church in Aldergrove, British Columbia and raised four children together in Vancouver.

In addition to a career in family medicine, George served on church and Bible College boards, helped create and teach in a residency program for UBC, managed

a charitable foundation, supported missionaries and pastors, and welcomed many with Kay to their home for hospitality, conversation, and wise counsel. But perhaps nowhere has George's success been more epitomized than in the past four months of his life. After his diagnosis, as he increasingly realized what the outcome was going to be, he became more and more gentle, more caring, more loving, and more gracious. His best characteristics became even more dominant in his life.

George was committed to his faith and it grew deeper as things got harder. He spoke of feeling the Holy Spirit's comfort and guidance, sensing Jesus' thoughts, understanding grace and forgiveness more and more. He grew in thankfulness towards people and gratitude and wonder towards God.

George was a man who spent his life using his gifts to help bring orderly wisdom and godly sense to situations that seemed bent on chaos. As time and sickness overtook him, that gift was less in word and deed and more in presence and warmth. But still, it grew stronger right to the end. He left us with the best of him in our hearts and his loving voice in our ears, the memory of which will bring a spring to our step for the rest of our lives.

George Goertzen, predeceased by his wife Kay, brother Henry, sisters Adeline and Annie, is survived by his sister Mary, daughters LaDonna (son in law Mel) and Darlene (son in law Mike); sons Philip (daughter in law Noni), and Gerald (daughter in law Debbie), twelve grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.