

A Tribute to Simon Cox

BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities

Remembering Simon

Simon was a strong force in creating the current golden age of assistive technology. He catalyzed research and development by encouraging his colleagues to pay attention to assistive technology and by encouraging countless bio-medical engineers and technicians to enter the field.

He was the honest broker, bringing together engineers and end users and promoting inventive ways to solve problems. He always conveyed a sense of excitement and hope to people with disabilities and to engineers because he was always convinced that there was a solution no matter how challenging the problem.

Simon applied his skills as an engineer, a problem solver, a motivator and, above all, a mentor to people with disabilities who dreamed about becoming more independent.

Personal service was a vocation for Simon and he did not seek the limelight that he richly deserved. He was beloved by the people he served because of his empathy, compassion and respect for them. He demonstrated leadership every day by promoting their

interests ahead of his own and by rejoicing in every one of their accomplishments. As a consequence, the people that Simon served were empowered by their contact with him and many have gone on to become inventors, entrepreneurs, artists, professionals and peer mentors. His professional work and his character brought people with disabilities out of the shadows and into the world.

Simon would be the first person to say that he was lucky to be able to contribute his knowledge, skill, empathy and compassion to the field of assistive technology over more than 30 years. Yet it is we who knew him who were lucky that we had a chance to be



in his orbit. And what an orbit it was because when you were with Simon you could travel anywhere his limitless imagination and curiosity could take you.

It was a privilege to know him and to serve with him.

~ *Christine Gordon*

From Simon's Family

I would like to extend a heartfelt appreciation to ALL the people who supported Simon throughout his career, and to ALL the people who were there until and after the end of his life

Thank you very much for the comfort and support that you have given us. We cannot express enough how happy we are that Simon was loved by so many people. Thank you.

~ *Rosie*

Simon Cox

Simon was born in Canvey Island in the Thames Estuary, England. His parents with their family of three boys immigrated to Canada and settled in Flin Flon, Manitoba.

They lived there until 1959 when they moved to Edmonton. The family had grown to five boys and one girl. Simon lived in Edmonton (except for a couple of years in the army in Petawawa) until the mid-1970's, when he moved to Vancouver.

Simon graduated from the Electronics Program at what was then



April 5, 1948 – March 25th, 2016

the Grant McEwan Community College in Edmonton.

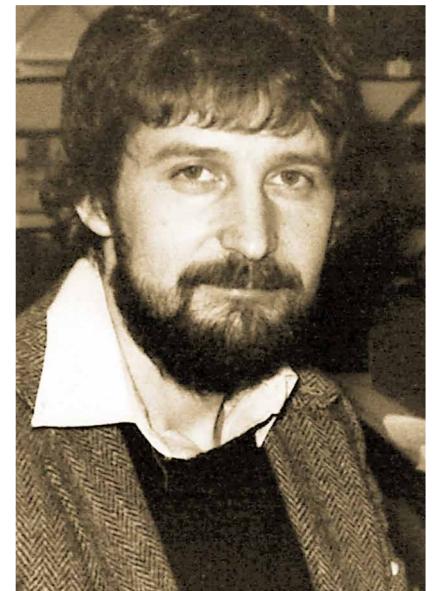
He is predeceased by his parents, Victor and Joyce Muriel Cox (Hearn). He is deeply missed by all who survive him, his wife, Rosa "Rosie", his brothers Stephen, Julian (Sandi), Nigel (Sandra), David (Linda), and his sister Jennifer (Bill Page), his nieces and nephews, and his numerous friends and colleagues.

Simon worked with the Kinsmen Foundation of BC for over 30 years and was a leading advocate for people with disabilities providing technological support to individuals in their homes, improving their quality of life and independence.

Through his tireless perseverance and "there is always a way" attitude he built the organization BC Association for Individualized Technology and Support for People with Disabilities (BCITS).

Simon's belief was that those he served be given every opportunity to make decisions about the resources they need to participate fully in their community and that they have a choice in determining these resources.

Simon will be remembered for his corny jokes, his dry humor, and endless philosophical discussions.



"If we were to set milestones in our lives that refer to important events or changes, one could reflect on the people that were influential in our lives."
~ Simon Cox, 2015

Thoughts from Simon

The following are some thoughts and passages Simon sent to friends in recent months.

It is not the critic who counts,
Not the man who points out how
the strong man stumbled
Or where the doer of deeds
could have done them better.
The credit belongs to the man
Who is actually in the arena,
Whose face is marred by dust
and sweat and blood,
Who strives valiantly,
Who errs and comes short again
and again,
Who knows great enthusiasms,
The great devotions,
Who spends himself in a worthy
cause,
Who at the best, knows in the
end the triumph of high achievement,
And who, at the worst, if he fails,
at least fails while

Daring greatly,
So that his place shall never be
With those timid souls
Who know neither victory or defeat. ~ *Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the United States*

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low, and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but do not quit.
Success is failure turned inside out,

The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you can never tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far,
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things go wrong that you must not quit.
~ "Don't Quit," Author Unknown

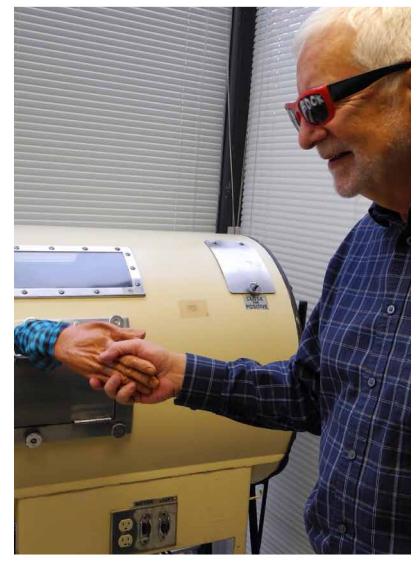
Do not let your fire go out, spark by irreplaceable spark, in the hopeless swamps of the approximate, the not-quite, the not-yet, the not-at-all. Do not let the hero in your soul perish, in lonely frustration for the life you deserved, but have never been able to reach. Check your road and the nature of your battle. The world you desired can be won. It exists, it is real, it is possible, it is yours. ~ Ayn Rand

Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication. ~ Leonardo Da Vinci

I am so thankful for many of you that I have as friends. It all makes this easier. I don't know how long I have to go, but I am going out strong.

One thing I know is that I have not done enough with my life. I think I had the capacity to make greater things happen, I could have travelled more, educated myself more, been more artistic, music loving and on and on.

Only a great life comes from those things. Who cares when your life ends? It is while we are living that we can make change. After death, who really knows? Anyway, I will be packing my bags for Mars. ~ Simon Cox



Remembered by Family, Friends and Colleagues

In memory of our dear friend and colleague, Simon Cox. We are forever thankful for the opportunity to have known and worked with this amazing community leader and individual. He will never be forgotten. ~ *The Kramer Family*

It was a pleasure and privilege to know Simon as a friend and colleague. Condolences to those closest. ~ *Margret Perry*

A lovely, kind man who I'll miss deeply. He was a great support to me and to Disability Alliance BC. RIP Simon. ~ *Jane Dyson*

Simon was a giant and a huge influence on me. I am pleased to make a small donation in his memory to continue the good work he started and which BCITS carries on. ~ *Chris Speropoulos*

I remember Simon as someone who was very positive and en-

couraging. He always had a way of making you smile or laugh. I will remember him as someone who never said no to a person who needed his engineering miracles, and I hope to take his can-do attitude with me wherever I go. ~ *Roger VZ*

The Cerebral Palsy Association of British Columbia has lost a great friend and supporter, with the passing of Simon Cox.

Simon Cox was a passionate supporter and served on the CPABC Board of Directors as Vice President between 2003 and 2005.

Through his knowledge and commitment to issues affecting people with disabilities, he helped to steer the organization through tough times. We will always be grateful for his diligence and contribution to restructuring the organization, leading to many of our current successes.

His leadership and vision helped the Association provide a better quality of life for people living with cerebral palsy. Simon personally provided substantial contributions to the Association in the form of accessibility and equipment advances, and providing a more functional and friendly office space.

His efforts made a tremendous impact on lives of people around him. His life was a blessing and his memory a treasure. May he rest in peace.

Simon and I were reflecting on life, having a coffee break early in January at one of our meeting places near the Pier in White Rock. I believe our conversation let me know that he had no regrets about his life and I echoed his thoughts.

We were two ordinary men and as one Zen Master said, "The mind of the ordinary man is the same as that of the sage because the Original Mind is perfect and complete in itself." I believe, that although Simon thought of himself as an ordinary man, he was an Exceptional Human Being. Always promoting and assisting the underdog and those truly in need. Thank you Simon for all that you did.

I honour you Simon. The Japanese word for this is "Meiyo" and I would leave with this: when our life is based on respect and complete trust, it will be completely peaceful. As you did Simon, we should respect people and everything. We can practice respecting





people and things in the way we relate with them.

Thank you Simon for calling me Friend. I will always remember you with respect. ~ **Frank Nose**

Next, came a wonderful gentleman called Simon Cox. He said, "We can make your remote on your bed work better"— and so he did. Then, Simon said, "You need an automatic door.

~ **Suzette Lewis**

I knew Simon Cox for approximately 15 years, 12 of which I worked for him.

Simon was a true free spirit always thinking ahead and wondering what could be done to enhance or improve the clients' quality of life and independence.

He became my friend as well as my boss and he would often gently ask me to calm down when I went on a rant about one thing or another.

In turn, I would often ask him to focus when we were in meetings because his brain would be

racing ahead of what was being discussed and a decision had to be made!

Simon enjoyed life and technology, he loved to talk about old movies, songs, new technology vs. old technology, and reminisce about old times. I will miss that.

He instilled in me a wish to be a better person and to always look to our clients for advice, strength and humour which I found in abundance.

He will be greatly missed, but I am sure that his spirit is around and will still be telling me to calm down. ~ **Gillian Harney, RRT**

I lived at the Pearson Centre until 1992. Around 1975, the Kinsmen Foundation and Simon Cox gave the residents with TVs an adapted device that enabled them to turn their TV on/off and change channels. At that time, it was very innovative; a little bit of independence!

Simon Cox set up the device for me. Back then, Simon was out working in the field and I was one of the early recipients of these controls that let me do things for myself. ~ **Terry LeBlanc**

I called Simon Cox at the Kinsmen and he came up with an adaption that I was able to operate with one finger and two very sensitive switches. I was able to work for over ten years because of that device.

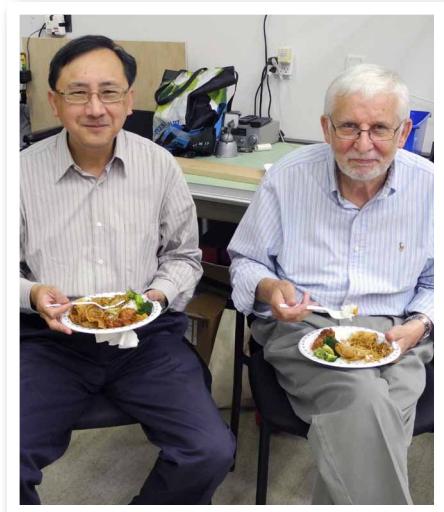
~ **Jeanette Andersen, 2011.**

t is with immense pride and sadness that I write a tribute for Simon. I have not had the pleasure of working with Simon for decades, but I had an intimate glance of this humorous and humble man in these last five years.

Despite his difficulties in health in the last year, he still arrived at work caring about the staff and clients at BCITS. Simon set a warm, kind tone at work, and he inspired us to do the same when working with our clients.

Along the way, he also made a lot of corny jokes and many friends. Behind the jokes, I believe he wanted people to feel included and to feel comfortable. He was the perfect person to run a program like BCITS, as he only saw potential in people.

Simon has left a program that provides support for people with disabilities, but that is not his only legacy. His intelligence and benevolence has also left an indelible imprint on all our hearts. We will miss you Simon. ~ **Esther Khor**



Just a Few of Simon's Awards and Kudos

Simon received the 2009 ALS Society of Canada's Marcel Bertrand Exceptional Support Services Program Award, during an awards ceremony in 2010, for BCITS' extraordinary efforts to help those with ALS in BC.

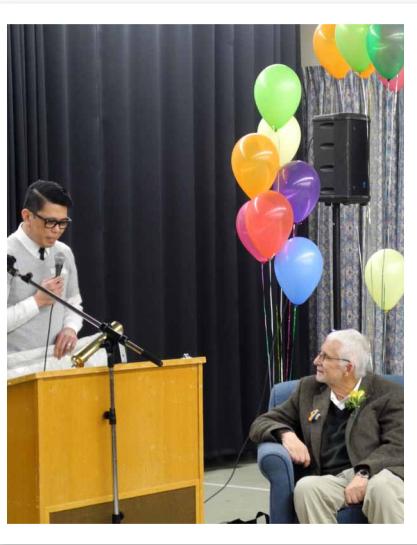
He also received the Hal Rogers Fellow award. This is the highest award given by the Kin Canada Foundation. The prestigious program recognizes individual Kin, Association Members, Kin Alumni and non-Kin who have made a significant contribution to the community and to Canada.

Recipients are not chosen for who they are or what they do for a living. They are nominated and chosen for what they give back to Canada and its citizens.

Simon received this award in 2014.

Simon worked with the Kinsmen Foundation of British Columbia for many years, and continued to support the Foundation and people with disabilities through his work with BCITS.

His efforts made a major impact on the lives of thousands of people in British Columbia.



A Tribute from the Kinsmen Foundation

This year, Kinsmen lost a dear friend, Simon Cox H.R.F. My first involvement with the Kinsmen Rehabilitation Foundation of British Columbia was when I was a Deputy Governor for the Okanagan Mainline Zone of the Kinsmen of District Five (BC).

Over the years, some things have changed and some have stayed the same. One of the things that has always stayed constant was Simon's support of Kinsmen Foundation and people with disabilities.

A couple of years ago, Simon was awarded one of Kinsmen's most outstanding awards. He was awarded the Hal Rogers Fellow (H.R.F.).

In addition, in recognition of his outstanding dedication and support of the Kinsmen Foundation of BC and people with Disabilities, the Kinsmen of District Five named an award after him. The Simon Cox Award is given out each year at the provincial convention of Kinsmen to clubs who have displayed outstanding support to the Kinsmen Foundation and to people with Disabilities in their own communities.

I had the pleasure of working with this amazing man for over 50 years and I am really going to miss him.

When I look back at the history of the Kinsmen Foundation of BC and the people who have been long associated with it, Simon's name is synonymous with so many of our successes.

He started as an employee in the Technology for Independent Living Department of the Kin Foundation and become its Manager. Then he branched out on his own and worked independently with all disability groups and individuals in the province.

Kinsmen became a much better organization when we asked Simon to join our Board of Directors, and our Board will miss him as well.

Like everything he did, Simon was totally committed to the work of our Foundation and was instrumental in making sure we kept on track in the delivery of the most urgent needs of people with disabilities.

Simon, my friend, you made an incredible impact on the quality of life of thousands of people with disabilities, not only here in BC, but around the world.

We are all in a better place because of you and I am so proud that our Association made the



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decision to award you a Hal Rogers Fellow.

Thank you for all that you have done. You have made us so very proud. We offer our sincere condolences to Rosa and his family. His Family of Kin will miss him very much. ~ Jim Watson, H.R.F.

Yes, I Accept Your Invitation to Join BCITS

The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS) Home of Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP) & Technology for Independent Living (TIL)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

**Please mail this form along with any applicable membership fees to
BCITS: #103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6. Thank you.**

Please Check One

- Membership for Registered BCITS Clients** Please mail completed form to BCITS (the cost of postage constitutes your membership fee)
- Non-client Membership** Please mail completed form along with \$20 annual membership fee payable to BCITS.

BCITS  technology for living

Messages on Simon's Memorial Web Page

A man like Simon was a rare Gem. It was my greatest pleasure to have worked with you...I will miss you my friend. ~ *Ravi Nair, Mill Bay, British Columbia*

I was very privileged to have worked with Simon for over 10 years while with the Kinsmen Rehabilitation Foundation of B.C. A wonderful colleague and friend and will always be remembered. I think of him as a genius! What a sense of humor! I indeed will light a candle. ~ *Joyce (Ross) Nicholls*

Simon you were a very good friend to Wayne and me. Our condolences to your family. You will be missed. ~ *Mary Corlett, Burnaby, British Columbia*

Simon was an extraordinary man. We will remember him for his smile and kindness. He will be greatly missed. ~ *Mutya De Leon, Winnipeg, Manitoba*

What a gifted, kind man this world was blessed with. He will be missed.

I know for certain that we never lose the people we love, even to death. They continue to participate in every act, thought and decision we make. Their love leaves an indelible imprint in our memories. We find comfort in knowing that our lives have been enriched by having shared their love. ~ *BGM, Sydney*

