

# Dr. John Moffat

**September 3, 1930 -**

When general surgeon Dr. John Moffat, MD., FRCS(C), left his office for the final time -- it was a Friday in 1999 -- he called it quits on a career that spanned nearly 40 years.

Moffat, then 68, a graduate (1954) of the University of Toronto, set up practice in Galt at 12 Dickson St. in December, 1960, three years after marrying Dolores Sprowls.

His impact on the community extended far beyond the operating theatre. He was one of the founders of the annual Can-Amara Games in 1972, and was a founding member of the Galt Rotary Club in 1964.

Can-Amara was, in fact, an offshoot of the Rotary Club. The club had been searching for a way to engage the city's youth, and the idea of an international Olympic-style games between Galt and Saginaw Township was a natural fit for the Rotary Club. It would go strong for the next 35 years.

"It was more successful than we ever thought it would be," he said. "We did it to broaden the city's recreation programs and we thought we would learn something from the experience with Saginaw Township."

Can-Amara, with Moffat at the helm as chairman for the first several years, accomplished that goal nicely.

"I thought we learned a great deal," he said. "We saw a lot of things come to the community, including a big reinforcement for local basketball, the John Dolson Pool, and the track at Southwood Secondary School.

But if Cambridge broadened its recreational scope because of Can-Amara, so too did Saginaw Township. As a result of the strong presence of soccer in Cambridge, Saginaw Township was able to build its soccer program.

By 2006, said Moffat, Can-Amara had run its course. "There were thousands and thousands of people who contributed as financial backers or as volunteers to the Games. It was fun and I really enjoyed it."

As a yearly Can-Amara tradition, the Moffats would play an annual three-set tennis home and away series on Can-Amara weekend against Saginaw's Frank Jones and his wife.

"There were no prizes,

just glory," mused Moffat.

Born in Hamilton to Jack and Mary Regis (Harris) Moffat his grandfather William John was a vice principal at Hamilton's Central Collegiate. Moffat arrived in Galt with his family in February of 1938, attending St. Mary's school on Beverly St. before going away to boarding school, including De La Salle College, where he graduated in 1948.

He graduated from medical school in 1954, and completed a five-year surgical course at St. Michael's Hospital and Toronto General in 1960.

He and Dolores were married on July 13, 1957, and during the next several years, had six children.

Moffat left Toronto for quieter surroundings, heading to Peterborough for five months "to earn some money."

Returning to Galt, he set up practice in Dr. Catherwood's old office in downtown Galt. "I liked the city," he said. He had few reservations about coming back to Galt, except for one. "These are the people I grew up with," he thought. "Will they want to come to me?"

They did. And in the intervening 38 years, he was consumed by his practice, his family, and various community endeavors.

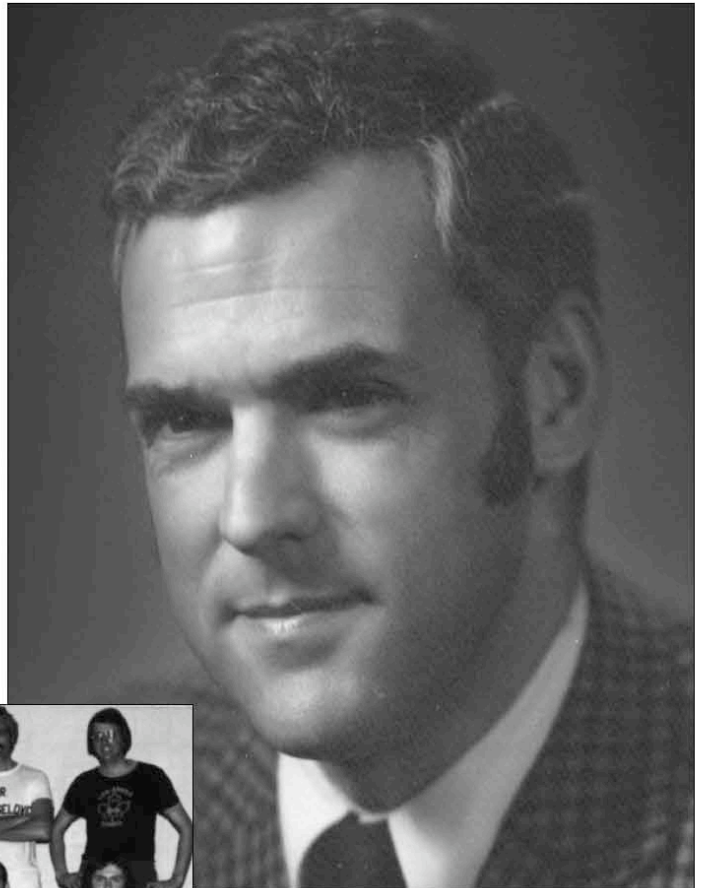
His father, a member of the Cambridge Hall of Fame, a grocer, farmer, restaurateur, and businessman, was heavily involved in the community, including serving on the executive of the Galt Jr. A hockey teams -- the Rockets and Blackhawks -- in the 1940s.

The elder Moffat also served on City Council in the 1950s, and set an example for community involvement that his son followed.

Alderman Charlie Nagge asked Dr. Moffat to become involved on the Parks Board in the mid-1960s, and he also became heavily involved in the Soper Park Tennis Club with Don Rope.

"I knew Don at the U of T and he was anxious to get tennis going here. He was the brains and I was the gopher."

Rope built up a terrific program at Soper Park, and the club grew by leaps and bounds. There were big tournaments at the club, drawing international players.



**Dr. John Moffat, above, in the mid-1960s, and far left, shortly before his retirement after 39 years as a general surgeon.**

"Don had the enthusiasm, the knowledge and the contacts to make it successful," he said.

Moffat served as president of the club for a couple of years, and was also instrumental in financing various programs.

Under Moffat and Rope a new clubhouse was built and the junior program reached its zenith.

Moffat has thoroughly enjoyed the sporting life. As a boy and young man, his first love was hockey. Then, after marrying Dolores, he gained a real love for tennis. He also

got heavily involved in volleyball for much of his adult life, a sport he played in Can-Amara for many years.

Today, in his 70s, he still plays tennis, as well as golf.

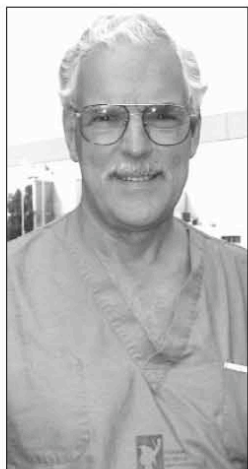
"I've always liked the sports environment," he said. "I've had great pleasure and a huge amount of enjoyment out of sports, just not a lot of success."

But he was a solid tennis player, and at 6'4", he was a strong presence at the net in volleyball. Indeed, he was part of several championship volleyball teams, including the 1977 Ontario YMCA championship Cambridge squad.

His community involvement wasn't hindered by a successful career as a surgeon. He was president of the medical staff at South Waterloo Memorial Hospital in 1965-66, served with the Cambridge Community Foundation for 10 years, including a three-year stint as chairman, and was awarded Cambridge's Citizen of the Year Award in 1973 by the Civic Service Club.

Moffat served on the Wilfrid Laurier University Board of Directors from 1977 to 1983, including a year as chairman in 1982-83. He was also a director of the Association for the Mentally Retarded in the early to mid-1960s.

"I've met a lot of interesting people through sport, and that has been a very



**Dr. Moffat, back centre, as a member of the 1977 Ontario YMCA championship team.**

**Inducted 2005**