

Tribute to Clayton Carroll

by Jim Burns

The meeting began with a moment of silence for Clayton Carroll.

It is with sadness that I speak to you about our special Calgary South Rotary friend, and my long term business associate and friend, Clayton Carroll. Clayton has know me since I was 6 years old.

Clayton was born in Nevis, Alberta on April 28th, 1920. He passed away peacefully in his home early Sunday morning at the ripe old age of 91 years. His health was good right up to the end, with the exception of an occasional blip, and recently some memory loss.

As an aside, I believe Norma, who Clayton married in 1970, has been a wonderful, constant and steadfast companion for Clayton, and that she has been responsible for helping keep him healthy, active, and enjoying life over the past 41 years.

Clayton's family moved from the farm to Calgary in 1935, and after graduating from Central High School, he went to SAIT to take automotives, from which he was recruited as a skilled tradesman for the manufacture of naval guns at the Ogden Shops. He soon became foreman at that munitions plant during the war.

After the war he got involved in the Automotive Industry at Hammill Motors and became Service Manager for their product line of "Hudson" Cars. Trucks beckoned to him and he took a job with the White Motor Company of Canada selling large "White" Trucks, and the even larger "Autocar" trucks to customers like Shirley's Trucking, who had major coal-hauling contracts in the Crow's Nest Pass. While at White Trucks he worked for Bob Tetrault, who had become a great friend. Bob had pestered Clayton to join Manchester Rotary but Clayton was too busy. His confident manner, integrity and leadership skills had helped him become one of the top sales people for the White Motor Company in North America.

Meanwhile, Clayton had become a silent partner with long time friend, Jim Burns (my Dad), in a start-up Asphalt paving company, Pioneer Paving Ltd. In 1955 he left the White Motor Company, to the chagrin of Bob and the company, to become the Manager of the Paving company, where he continued successfully guiding it until 1978.

I'm going to leave the work side for a moment, and touch on Rotary.

In 1957 Bob Tetrault finally convinced Clayton to join Rotary and sponsored him in the Manchester (later Calgary South) Rotary Club. During his 54 years in our Club Clayton served as a Director in 1965-66, and became President in 1973-74. He was a faithful attendee at meetings wherever he was vacationing or travelling. He and Norma, his wife of 41 years, attended numerous RI Conventions, the Peace Park Celebrations, and District Conferences. He worked on countless committees and over the years Members whom he sponsored, included three whom the older Members will recall —Jim Cowie, George Brierley and me.

Since my involvement didn't begin until 2000, I missed those early years of Clayton and Rotary; but I didn't miss some of the more recent high points such as in 2003 when Clayton was awarded RI's "Service Above Self" Award given to select individuals for their exemplary humanitarian service. And I didn't miss the presentation of SAIT's Distinguished Alumnus Award which followed his and his wife Norma's generous presentation to SAIT of the "Clayton Carroll Automotive Centre" Facility.

Although Clayton retired from the paving business in 1978 he continued in other directions which included his ownership in Carburn Aggregates with Jim Sr. and myself, other property investments, oil and gas well drilling, and his favourite, his ranch and cattle near Longview on the Highwood River which he visited regularly until recently.

Clayton told me a number of years ago that like he and Norma, the best friends that my wife, Pat and I will have will be Rotarians. He was right!

He'll be missed at the table with the "old guys", and he'll be missed by the rest of us. Farewell, Clayton.

