

In Memoriam

Donald Leishman McNeill

April 18, 1922 - September 14, 2005



Don McNeill passed away Wednesday evening September 14, 2005. He was a Charter Member of the Rotary Club of Calgary South, a Club his father Leishman McNeill was instrumental in founding in 1955.

Don was a native Calgarian, born April 18, 1922. Following his education in Calgary schools he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force and was trained as a bomber pilot. He was attached to Lions squadron in England and flew 16 missions before the war ended.

Following his RCAF service he attended the University of Alberta and graduated in Mining Engineering and embarked on a career in the oil industry with National Supply . Don's second career following National Supply was with The Investors Group.

Don and Joyce were married in 1947. They were proud parents of four children and grandparents to nine. Joyce passed away March 24, 2005.

Don was a dedicated Rotarian - he did about everything in the Club - Director, Secretary, Committee Chairman, President and District Committees including organizing two District Conferences.

Don loved the fun and fellowship of our weekly meetings, and he was quick to compliment members who contributed to the fun and fellowship. Don and Joyce were regulars at Club social events. They did a tour of Italy with Rotarian friends before attending the 1995 Rotary International Convention in Nice, France.

Our condolences go out to Don's family.

Here are two excerpts from Peter Penner's history of Our Club "Manchester to Calgary South 1955 - 2005" that illuminate Don McNeill the Rotarian, the President, the Man.

Don McNeill, President, 1964-65

Few Manchester presidents were spared from embarrassing moments. Among the persons who helped create the 'Manchester style' of boisterous fun were Jim Sands and Jack Harty, real 'cards', practical jokers. For example, when Don McNeill was about to start one of his meetings as President in July 1964, they created a bell from plaster of Paris, and painted it gold. When Don gave it a whack the whole thing shattered into pieces. No wonder Bob Dawson said, in anticipation of taking over as president in 1971, that he was waiting 'to knock the hell out of the bell"! As told, there was from the beginning so much fun, a style of fellowship peculiar to this Club.

Don was not even spared by his own family for being so taken up with Rotary. His daughter Donna, age 18, came to Manchester Club on April 18, 1964 to read this poem on President Don McNeill's birthday:

In 1922 Grammie gave birth to two
The first, a girl, so pink and pretty
Followed by "Oh my! What a pity!"
The looks, the brains, the personality were
Not divided equally.
My auntie Marion [married Don Magee] got them all
My Daddy just grew big and tall
For many years he was around
And then in Rotary he was found,
So Happy Birthday Dad!
When you're all done, I'll sure be glad!

Ron Prokosch did well to write about **Don McNeill**, another charter member who came from the pioneer family that produced Leishman McNeill, one of the promoters of the Manchester Club in 1954-55. During the War Don served in the RCAF, flying many missions over enemy territory. He married Joyce in 1949, graduated as a mining engineer and worked in the oilpatch for 18 years. Once Manchester was formed in 1955, Don served on virtually every committee, was a director of the Boys & Girls Club of Calgary, became President in 1964-1965, organized two district conferences and also served on district committees. His second career in the investment business kept him working until a few years ago (1991).



LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON. Don McNeill becomes president of the Manchester Rotary Club in June. Don's father, Leishman McNeill, was president of Downtown Rotary in 1954. Swearing-in ceremonies in June will mark the first time in the history of Calgary Rotary that a father and son have held presidential office.