



REMEMBERING
Arthur Simmons

November 12, 1920 - April 8, 2020



Celebrating Arthur's life and mourning his passing are his son Brian (Lynn), granddaughters, Kerry and Julie (Emerson), and great grandchildren, Connelly and Brady. He was born to Elizabeth and Norman Simmons at Didsbury, Manchester, Lancashire, England and was predeceased by his wife of 42 years, Eveleen (Wright); siblings, Bonner and Barbara; and infant great grandson, Hayden Heaton.

Arthur grew up in the depression era as a member of a loving family in industrial Manchester. With the gift of a singing voice he became a church and cathedral chorister, something he shared throughout his early adult life. His spirit sparked his life-long support of the Manchester United Football Club. He never tired of telling how in awe he was at his first sighting of a biplane flying overhead. He completed his formative education at Charlton Municipal High School for Boys (1936) and Manchester Municipal School of Commerce (1939), before acquiring work as a tool merchant's clerk.

In 1940 Arthur enlisted in the Royal Air Force, and received technical training as an Airframe Mechanic at Padgate and Cheltenham, England before being posted to RAF Operational Training Unit 31, Debert, Nova Scotia, a base in support of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. While a Sunday chorister at nearby St John's Church, Truro, he met and married (1944) the love of his life, Eveleen, of neighbouring Bible Hill. He returned to Britain later the same year and despite the war, Eveleen was able to join him there shortly after. When he was discharged from the RAF in 1946, he immigrated to Canada with his wife and infant son. In 1948 he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and served at numerous bases, Greenwood NS, Comox BC, Chatham NB and again, Comox BC. The recipient of various wartime service medals, in 1953 Arthur was one of a very few servicemen and women who were awarded the Queen's Coronation Medal. One of his

proudest achievements was attaining the trade designation, Airframe Technician Group 4A.

Arthur's life changed dramatically in 1953 when Eveleen's health deteriorated drastically requiring open heart surgery, one of the first such pioneering operations of its time, at the Institute of Cardiology, Montreal. He selflessly supported her as a caregiver for her fourteen-week convalescence, took up all the responsibilities of home care and dedicated himself to Eveleen's care for the rest of her life. This dedication continued through two more open-heart surgeries for her in 1967.

Upon his retirement from the Armed Forces in 1971, Arthur and Eveleen took up residence in Courtenay. With his enthusiasm for mathematics, in 1973 Arthur completed the certification requirements of the Malaspina College Commercial Bookkeeping Program. Arthur and Eveleen spent many happy hours with friends and family playing card and board games, enjoyed family picnics at Rath Trevor Beach, and long drives in the evening.

With Eveleen's passing in 1986, Arthur found himself a widower at age 66. Out of necessity he developed a passion for cooking and rudimentary sewing. His favorite dish to prepare was sweet and sour pork on a bed of rice. Many of his happiest moments came when he was able to create with his hands. He kept his mind sharp by mastering cryptic crossword puzzles. His heart was stolen by every child he encountered, from an infant's squeeze of his extended finger, to a high five with a five-year old. During this time he was embraced by a second family, managers Stephen and Tracy Caissie, the staff and the other regular patrons of Courtenay's Cliffe Avenue Tim Hortons. His participation in Camp Day was one of the highlights of his year. Arthur was very proud of his son and granddaughters and was often known to speak of their educational and professional accomplishments. By 2009, the ravages of Parkinson's Disease caused him to take up assisted living in Retirement Concepts, Courtenay. Following a stroke in 2011, Arthur needed to be closer to his family and relocated to Cairnsmore Place, Duncan. During his eight years of residence, his son, Brian, visited him daily to feed him his lunch until Arthur slipped away on April 8, 2020.

Arthur had an exemplary work ethic, expected the best of himself, and, correspondingly, others. He had a sharp sense of humor, a keen intellect, and an indomitable spirit; a spirit that will live on in his son, granddaughters and great-grandchildren. His credo: "If you start something, finish it." He will be fondly remembered for his fastidious dress and the shiniest boots on parade and the shiniest shoes on all other occasions. He was a fine example of what has come to be known as the Greatest Generation. Arthur's family extends grateful thanks and appreciation to all those who cared for him during the challenging last years of his life: Dr Bryan Bass and those who provided outstanding support and compassion at Cairnsmore Place, especially Julie who, in Arthur's last hours while shaving him suggested, "The pipes would be playing to welcome him, his wartime buddies would be lined up to salute him and soon he would be dancing with Eveleen."

