



REMEMBERING Ernest Woods

June 12, 1925 - September 2, 2013

After a long, happy and remarkable life, Ernie Woods died quietly in Duncan, BC, in the early morning hours of September 2, 2013, at the age of 88.

Ernie was always younger than his stated age, until cardiac events began to change him in November 2012. Despite modern technology and valiant efforts to recover from cardiovascular illnesses, he was simply unable to recover. This surprised us, as he had always been a driven and indefatigable force.

Ernie was born in Port Arthur, Ontario, on June 12, 1925, the 3rd of 5 children. He was always a great competitor, and did well at school. He loved sports and pursued them throughout his life. His strong suits were hockey, golf and swimming.

Ernie joined the Canadian Army in 1944 as a volunteer, and trained as a signalman. Armistice was declared before he was to join the Pacific theatre, so he saw no active service. After the war, he worked at Canada Car in Thunder Bay, producing Hawker Hurricane fighter planes for the war effort. He also worked with his brothers, Stan and Cliff, as a commercial fisherman on Lake Superior. This was followed by an exciting opportunity to move east and hire on to build a large pulp and paper mill in Terrace Bay, on the north shore of Lake Superior. He served a machinist's apprenticeship there, because he "loved the precision work," and this launched him into a 35-year career in the pulp and paper industry.

Terrace Bay was also home to a striking young nurse from Winnipeg by the name of Phyllis Birt. She had big brown eyes, much humour and wit. An adventurer like Ernie, she was drawn from afar to this new community. A mutual friend, Muriel Flater, arranged a blind date... and the rest is history. The two were married in 1950, produced 3 children, and made their home in Terrace Bay till opportunity came knocking in 1964. Our clan, at the persuasive suggestion of George Flater, did the bold thing, packing up and moving west to the booming BC forest industry.

Ernie had accepted a management position at the BC Forest Products Crofton paper mill.

Ernie progressed through the ranks at Crofton during the hay days of the forest industry, and retired in 1989 as the plant's Mechanical Superintendent. He oversaw much expansion and innovation, and was acknowledged as a strong leader with a bright mind and notable fairness with his staff. Retirement was marked by volunteer contributions to the Hospice Society and the Kiwanis Club.

Ernie and Phyllis were great models as parents. We could not have asked for more. He was the jack-of-all-trades and master of many. He was a great father, spouse and grandfather. He inspired everyone he knew and brought much love and enthusiasm to his many activities and friends. We had so much fun!

Sadly, Phyllis died in 1998 with respiratory complications, and Ernie adjusted to his new circumstances slowly. Fate brought he and Raija Loat, another widowed Crofton employee together a couple of years later, and she became the second love of his life. This couple travelled extensively in Europe, across Canada and locally, and forged a friendship that involved bridge, theatre, sports, music and the arts. They have been part a very vigorous and interesting local peer group. What a wonderful connection! Both families were delighted.

We bow to Raija's steadiness, love, practicality and kindness in assisting Ernie during his last months. She was not only a terrific companion when he was well, but a constant and supportive comfort in the face of mounting health challenges. Her contribution was inspired and inspiring.

Ernest Woods is predeceased by Phyllis in 1998 and he is survived by Raija, by his brother Stan and his sister Hazel, by his sons Tom (Lydia), Murray (Lia), by his daughter Barb, by his grandchildren Jesse, Nicola, Simon, Emily and Ian, and by Raija's sons Chris (Sarah) and Brian (Tammy), her daughter Cheryl (Tracy), and their children who, too, looked upon him as a grandfather.

Our family wishes to express thanks to Dr. Imad Nadra and the cardiology team and the nurses on 3S at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, and also to Dr. Jan Malherbe and the nursing staff on 2S at Cowichan District Hospital, for the excellent care and kindness they provided to Ernie during his recent times of medical need.

Ernie's celebration of life ceremony will take place at Duncan United Church, 246 Ingram Street, at 2 pm on Saturday, September 7, 2013. Flowers are gratefully declined in favour of donations that can be made in Ernie's memory to the BC Heart and Stroke Foundation, or to the charity of your choice. Online condolences may be offered at www.hwwallacecbc.com

