

EULOGY FOR LEON WARHAFT

Sept. 27, 2009

Dec 19 /14- Sept. 25 /09

Our Dad was born in Winnipeg in December 1914, the oldest of the four sons of David and Jenny Warhaft. He enjoyed his formative years there, playing on the streets with friends and cousins.

When Dad was nine years old, the family left Winnipeg. After short sojourns in various small towns in Saskatchewan, the family settled in Mundare, AB where his father ran a drygoods store with the help of his wife and children.

In Mundare, Leon led an interesting and varied life. He made many boyhood friends in the predominantly Ukrainian town. He also worked as a stringer for the newspapers,, would compose letters in Russian and Ukrainian for less literate townsfolk to send back to the Old Country, was a volunteer fireman, and learned to play tennis.

After high school, Leon moved to Edmonton, where he started his career in retail, and where he met Becky. They married on Aug. 18, 1940 on the Sonnenfeld Colony in Saskatchewan, where Becky's family farmed.

Daughters Sheila, Joyce and Bonnie were born in Edmonton. Dad enlisted in the Army during WWII, but unfortunately, due to his very poor eyesight, he was called out and discharged, just before his regiment was shipped overseas. He was always disappointed that he was prevented from serving.

In 1949, the young family moved to Camrose, where Dad managed Brody's Dept. Store on Main Street, for the next 16 years.

He was active in community affairs, including the Rotary, the Elks, and The Masonic Lodge.

In addition, Dad found time to bowl, curl and square dance with Becky, in various clubs and teams. Daughter #4, Penny Marlene, also arrived during this time.

During their years in Camrose, Leon and Becky made weekly trips to Edmonton, which always included a stop at the kosher butcher. They also made sure that the High Holidays and Passover were always observed with family in Edmonton. Dad was a member of Beth Shalom synagogue for close to 50 years.

Eventually, new business interests took Dad and Mom back to Edmonton. Dad particularly enjoyed his time in commercial real estate, and working as a consultant for the Federal Business Development Bank. He enjoyed, and was particularly proud, of mentoring young entrepreneurs.

He also served on the Board of Beth Shalom Synagogue for a number of terms, volunteered with the Edmonton Police Service to assist victims of crime, and for 15 years was a weekly volunteer at the Misericordia Hospital. Mom and Dad also took a special interest in visiting with Jewish patients who were confined to hospital.

After our Mom passed away in 2002, life became a little less bright for Dad. Yet, he continued to stay interested and active in life. He enjoyed theatre and he and I continued to attend the Citadel on a regular basis for a number of years. He also loved to go out for dinner with the family or to see a movie, and visiting with relatives and friends meant a great deal to him. He was an avid reader of newspapers and was very interested in current affairs. He also maintained an active interest in his grandchildren's studies and was excited for their futures. He was always ready with words of encouragement and advice for them. In 2005, as a spry 90 year old, he traveled to Israel to attend his great grandson

Benzion's bar mitzvah in Jerusalem. And a year later, he proudly walked down the aisle, unaided, at his grandson Evan's wedding in Toronto.

Throughout his life, our Dad was always a true gentleman, an honest businessman, and a loving and caring husband, father, brother and friend.

He leaves four daughters, 10 grandchildren, and 11 greatgrandchildren.

We will miss him.