

Donald Keith Fortescue Dawson, OLS# 687
February 20, 1918 – February 22, 2013



Donald Keith Fortescue Dawson passed away on February 22, 2013 - days after his 95th birthday.

The son of A. Earnest and Linda Dawson, he was born February 20, 1918, in Peterborough, Ontario. In WWII he volunteered to serve for the Canadian Army, Canadian Armoured Corps, in which he fought as a 2nd lieutenant in Italy, Belgium, and Holland.

He married the love of his life, Nancy Lane Young, of Victoria, on August 4, 1945, with whom he shared 68 wonderful years of marriage.

Don earned his OLS in 1949 and the following year his DLS. His Ontario Hydro work entailed wintering by tent in Northern Ontario's Sault Ste. Marie area.

Shortly thereafter bundled up his family (two children at that time) and moved to sunny Southern Alberta. There he worked for Jack Holloway, surveying provincial highways.

He became Alberta Land Surveyor #157 on October 24, 1950. His first ALSA convention was in 1951 and he created quite a stir by insisting that wives should be allowed to accompany husbands to the ALSA annual meeting from that time on. Until that time our function had been an all-male affair and the entertainment consisted mainly of drinking and relating the past year's experiences.

He joined Mobil Oil Canada in 1955, and continued with the company until his retirement in 1983.

I first met Don Dawson in 1963 when Don was with Mobil Oil Canada and I was with Shell Canada Limited. We became good friends and business associates. The Surveying and Mapping Committee of the Canadian Petroleum Association kept us in constant communication during the 1960s and 1970s.

Don was a strong supporter of survey education and control surveys that would better serve the petroleum industry. Don made a strong contribution to the offshore survey task force in Ottawa. The thought of positioning offshore drilling rigs hundreds of kilometres from land was a welcome challenge to Don Dawson. He, together with about a dozen surveyors from industry participated in a six-week training course in Ottawa. The course dealt primarily with positioning systems such as LORAN and Decca Lamba and was particularly heavy on mathematics which was the love of Don.

I do not want to give the impression that Don only wanted to work day and night. He certainly did his share of socializing with Energy Mines and Resources survey people and had a talent in music and song. He was usually the star of the evening.

Don always had to fly home every week because he was the church organist and choir master at three different churches in Edmonton every Sunday. Don was a professional land surveyor and always forthright with his opinion.

One day, in 1971, after I thought we were good friends, Don reminded me that he was unhappy with my practice of certifying offshore well sites as a commissioned Alberta Land Surveyor. I considered his words carefully and with little hesitation

proceeded to get my Dominion Land Surveyor's commission in 1972. The re-certifications followed.

Don was president of the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association in 1956, received the Professional Recognition Award in 1981-1982 and was made an honorary life member in 1988.

Don was a cheerful person who always had time to listen. I enjoyed working with D.K.F. Dawson.

Submitted by Alex Hittel

Obituary: Donald Keith Fortescue Dawson

Source: *The Edmonton Journal* – February 26, 2013

DAWSON, Donald Keith Fortescue February 20, 1918 - February 22, 2013 Days after his 95th birthday, Donald Dawson passed away peacefully at 2:00 p. m. at the Strathcona Long Term Care Facility in Sherwood Park, Alberta.

He is survived by his wife Nancy; daughters Leslie and Wendy (Kamil Krepelka); sons James (Lorna Walker) and Timothy (Kim Dunlop); seven grandchildren, Inja (Therese Moseby), Sylva (Jeffery Browning), Thomas, Victoria, Veronica, Julia and Samuel; and one great-granddaughter Maija. He was predeceased by sons Eric and Samuel.

The son of A. Earnest and Linda Dawson, he was born February 20, 1918, in Peterborough, Ontario. In WWII he volunteered to serve for the Canadian Army, Canadian Armoured Corps, in which he fought as a 2nd lieutenant in Italy, Belgium, and Holland. He married the love of his life, Nancy Lane Young, of Victoria, on August 4, 1945, with whom he shared 68 wonderful years of marriage.

At work Don qualified as Dominion, Ontario, and Alberta Land Surveyors. He conducted the first Canadian metric survey (Sable Island, NS), was one of the first to hire aboriginal Canadians on survey crews, was the 1956 president of the Alberta Land Surveyors Association, and pioneered satellite use in Canadian surveying.

He received many honours for his work. Don was well-known as a church organist and choir master at three churches, most recently St. Luke's Anglican Church, Edmonton. When he wasn't inspiring the choir to greater glories, he could be found rototilling his garden determined to beat the frost with his corn, planting trees, or leading rollicking sing-songs at the piano in his music room at his beloved country home, Hackmatack. A Memorial Service will be held at 2: 00 p. m. on Saturday, March 2, 2013 at St. Luke's Anglican Church, 8424 - 95 Avenue, Edmonton. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Salvation Army, which served Don during WWII