



**JOHN THOMAS GOURLAY
1926 - 1992**

by Mabel Gourlay, Bruce Wright, O.L.S. (ret) and Bill Ratz, O.L.S. (ret)

John Thomas Gourlay, the youngest child of Louis Osborne Gourlay and the former Isabella Maria Bell was born in the Township of South Dumfries, Brant County on October 25, 1926.

Jack's early life involved family moves to Manitoulin Island, Brampton and finally settling in Schomberg where he had his early education.

Upon completion of his honour matriculation at Humber College in Toronto, he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force, but due to the ending of hostilities, he was never called up for training.

After working for the Department of Highways for several months, Jack signed Articles of Agreement as a minor with Harold S. Howden on February 27, 1946, and as with many of the young apprentices, he went North for his training and it was while working in the Thunder Bay area that he met Mabel MacMillan who he married in 1950.

Upon receiving his commission as an Ontario Land Surveyor, Jack continued working in Northern Ontario, but by 1952 found that the long periods of absence

necessitated by this form of employment were not conducive to raising a young family and he obtained employment with the City Surveyor's Office in Hamilton and later established a private practice in Vineland for a short period of time.

Family ties and job opportunities lured Jack back to the Department of Highways in the Thunder Bay area in 1955.

Prior to Jack's retirement as Chief Surveyor for the Ministry of Transportation and Communications in 1983, he held responsible positions as Senior Inspector of Surveys and Regional Services Manager in the Ministry's North Western Region and in charge of the Control Survey Unit in Toronto.

Jack's intention upon retirement was to return to Thunder Bay and operate a small survey practice in a community where he had been active in the Association's Regional Group and in the affairs of the Masonic Connaught Lodge, #511 A.F. & A.M. and in over a thirty-five year career had developed many enduring friendships. However, shortly before making this change, he and his family became aware of a serious medical problem that curtailed any further move from Toronto.

Despite the change in plans, Jack and Mabel for many years were able to enjoy the winter months in Florida and latterly had an extensive and happy trip to Scotland to visit Mabel's ancestral home. Jack's retirement was saddened by the early passing away of his eldest son Stuart John Gourlay in 1985 in California. However, it was with pride that Jack saw his youngest son Douglas graduate from McMaster Medical School in 1986.

After a brief stay in hospital, Jack passed away on November 6, 1992, and will be lovingly remembered by his wife Mabel, his son Dr. Douglas Gourlay and his sister Margaret Webb, along with many friends who enjoyed Jack's affable, easy going nature which hid the strong sense of propriety that he placed on his life, his work and his friendships.

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