



JOHN J. KONING
1930 - 1990

The Association was saddened to learn of the passing of John J. Koning on October 17, 1990. John died suddenly at his home in Breslau, Ontario. Commissioned in 1959, John spent most of his career in private practice in Willowdale, before selling his business and retiring in 1989. Born in Baarm, Holland in 1930, John suffered the ruthless occupation of his country by the Nazis (1940-1944) as a young boy. Following the war he attended the Dutch Royal Navy Academy for 2 years. Concerned with the lack of opportunity in post-war Europe, and possessing an adventurous spirit, John decided to emigrate to Canada in 1950. Many Dutch immigrants of the early 1950's were required to spend a year or more working on farms and John spent his time working on a farm near Orangeville. Times were certainly different then. John used to recall the purchase of his first car from a used car-dealer in downtown Orangeville. Having picked out one he could afford, he told the dealer that as soon as he received his driver's licence he would come in and buy the car. The waiting period was shortened somewhat when the dealer revealed that he was also the local DHO driving examiner. And the exam was not so rigorous as now, being one simple question, "Can you drive?". Answering in the affirmative, John received both his licence and the car that afternoon.

In 1954, John moved to Toronto, found a job with Marshall, Macklin, Monaghan, and began his apprenticeship with Larry Monaghan. The first year was spent learning the skills of a surveyor's assistant, and John worked with many party chiefs who went on to become professional surveyors. One party chief, more than eager to impress the top-brass, piled John and the rest of the crew into his car, and roared up to Bancroft to survey a mining claim, only to discover upon arrival that the equipment was still in Don Mills. Whoops. John finished his articles with George Yates, and received his O.L.S. on February 4, 1959. He worked for Don MacIntosh for a time before starting his own practice in 1963.

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John was in business for 26 years, experiencing the ups and downs of the economy, the comings and goings of employees and artiled students and the sometimes satisfying, sometimes frustrating, business of working with the public.

John had the usual mix of clients. There was the chap who claimed that he had no cash whatsoever and wondered if John would consider taking 30 pheasants as payment for a building stake-out. It must have been the old farm-labourer in John that made him agree to terms.

Then there was the business executive who apologized for his overdue account and told John, as solemnly as a country parson, that he would be in the next day to pay in cash. Two days later, we saw him on the 6 o'clock news. He'd been arrested by the RCMP in Edmonton on fraud charges.

The vast majority of clients, of course, were honest and they held John in high regard, respecting his knowledge and experience and trusting in his judgement. Most clients paid on time and in full and John greatly appreciated this for he had a large family to feed and clothe.

John and his wife, Antonia, were married in 1955. They had 6 children, and by last count, 13 grandchildren. They lived in Richmond Hill for 27 years before moving to Breslau in 1989 after John retired.

John had many interests - woodworking, building furniture, carving decoys, framing prints, reading, gardening and music. John loved to sing. He would sing in the field. He would sing in the truck on the way to the field. And he would sing in the office. He had a Yamaha organ at home which he played every day. And he loved to share his music. As a volunteer worker at Birkdale Villa, a nursing home in Scarborough, John and Antonia conducted hymn singing services every Sunday for 12 years.

John was very active in community and church work. He worked for 8 years at the Christian Distress Clinic (a crisis intervention telephone service). He was President of the Willowdale Christian School Board and a chapter of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Association.

And John and his wife made their home into a shelter, housing numerous troubled individuals - runaways, victims of family violence, refugees. To these and many other people John was a true father-figure. Many people sought his advice, trusted in his counsel and counted on his generosity. And they all will miss him.

As a former employee and artiled student, I always appreciated his patience and unfailing good-cheer.

On behalf of the Association I wish to extend our sympathy to his wife and family.