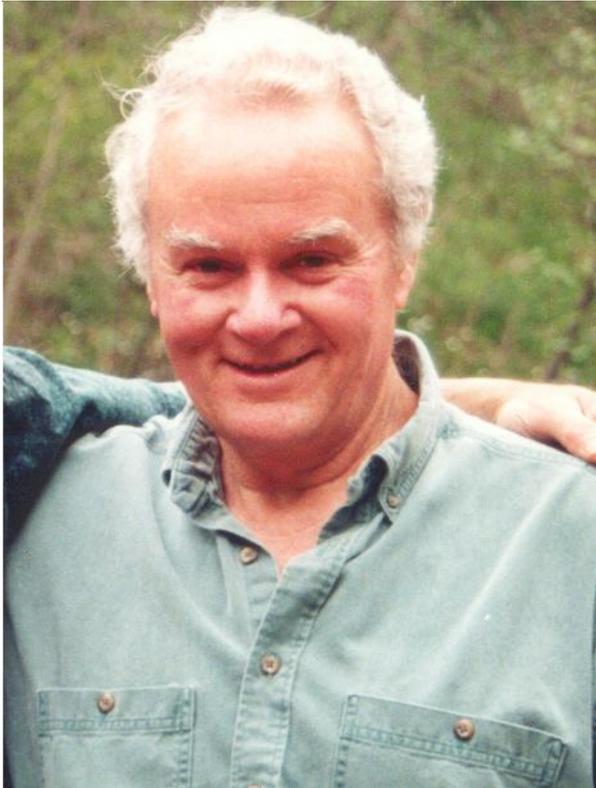


**John Alexander McSkimming, O.L.S. (#810)
1931 – 2006**

By Ralph Paul, O.L.S. (#1480)



John was born in the small town of Newmarket just north of Toronto in 1931. His Mother and my Mother were sisters. He lived at my Mother's house in East York while attending East York Collegiate. Upon graduating, he started to work for the firm of Unwin, Murphy and Esten and articulated to Mr. Charlie Manser. He completed his articles and was commissioned as an Ontario Land Surveyor on April 2nd 1951. He continued working at Unwin's for a few more years but eventually ventured out on his own. Along with John Fenton, O.L.S. (#842) they started up their own company under the name of John McSkimming, O.L.S.

John was married in 1953 to Noreen Shipton and by 1961; the two of them had been "blessed" with four boys – Rob, Jamie, David and John. In 1959 my brother and I lost our father to cancer. John immediately jumped in to offer us guidance and support. As I reflect back on those days, I am absolutely astounded that John was able to juggle the duties of being a father to four boys (all of whom were in hockey), of running his survey practice which at that time consisted of four crews and looking after his Mother who lived in a basement apartment in their house and still find the time to devote to my brother and I, but that was John.

John loved the outdoors and in the early '60's purchased a waterfront cottage lot on Lake Kawagama just outside of Dorset. At that time, the only access to the lot was by water so the pre-fab cottage was delivered by barge. He and Noreen and the boys shared many wonderful moments up at their little piece of paradise. John loved to survey and when any of his neighbours at the cottage approached him about doing some surveying work on their property, he was only too happy to oblige. He would then approach his sons with the enthusiasm of a pit bull in heat and say "break out the musk oil boys – we got some surveying to do" the boys knew only too well what this meant and scurried off to their usual hiding places. But John had been through this all before and managed to gather them all up and, if they were lucky, the survey would be completed before the snows

came. John's wife, Noreen, would unwittingly be drafted into service. John would take Noreen for a romantic walk along the path; they would find a transit, flashlights and a stopwatch. John explained he needed to do a star shot to complete the survey he was working on, Noreen simply rolled up her sleeves and proceeded to help him. That was Noreen.

Through the sixties and seventies John was very active in the survey profession often working seven days a week from sunrise to sunset. I was commissioned as a surveyor in 1979 and worked alongside John through the eighties. In the early nineties, John experienced some problems with his heart and was forced to abandon working in the field. John had a lovely home in North York that backed onto a ravine. He would often go for long walks through the valley as part of his therapy. Eventually he sold the house and relocated to a lovely house just outside of Barrie. Over the course of the past fifteen years, John suffered several heart attacks and unfortunately passed away on January 17th 2006. I remember writing in my diary on that day he passed away that if you looked up the word "humanitarian" in the dictionary you would find a picture of John – no word just a picture. Those that knew him will understand.

John was the kindest and most generous person that I have ever known. He had a wonderful sense of humour and a very positive impact on everyone he came in contact with. He was a devoted husband, father and mentor. We are all most fortunate to have known John for as long as we did. The memories of our times together will be forever cherished. Take care Big Guy!!