

Allan Louis Ryan, O.L.S.
July 30, 1927 – Oct. 10, 2007
Written With Love By His Children



Born in Seaforth, Ontario, Allan was the second child of Frank and Camilla Ryan. He was proud of his Seaforth roots and often returned to the town to visit with family and friends and reminisce about growing up in small town Ontario during the Depression.

After graduating from Seaforth high school, Allan studied engineering for one year at the University of Toronto. He tried his hand at various occupations before finding his true calling as a land surveyor.

Allan served his apprenticeship with H.S. Howden of the Department of Highways of Ontario, receiving his O.L.S. commission (no. 1019) in July

1959. He spent his entire 37-year career with the ministry that was renamed the Ministry of Transportation and Communication, or as Allan affectionately called it, the Ministry of Total Confusion.

Allan was a field supervisor, overseeing survey crews across Southwestern Ontario. His territory for many years was the Barrie area, where he was involved in survey projects on highways 400, 11, 69, 26 and 12. His colleagues at the time recall fondly how Allan, whose nickname was Big Al, transported himself, an armful of survey documents and instruments in his compact Renault Le Car. Several of Allan's colleagues from the Ministry of Transportation came to his visitation. One of them gave the family a DVD containing a home movie that showed a youthful Allan and co-workers on a job site in the early days of his career. The family is grateful for the rare glimpse of Allan on the job.

As proud as Allan's family was of him, he was equally proud of them. He and his wife Mary Bradley, a transplanted Maritimer, raised four children: Camilla, John, Tim and Kara. Often absent because he was working out of town, Allan made up for it when he was home by volunteering to coach and making a rink for the neighbourhood kids to enjoy. He was an active member of Holy Family (formerly St. Pius X) parish and volunteered with the St. Vincent de Paul and the St. Joseph's soup kitchen.

Throughout his life, children were drawn to him because, as his wife Mary said, he never talked down to them. He was a favourite uncle and a treasured grandfather to his 12 grandchildren. Friends and family miss his gentle spirit, sense of humour, patience and genuine concern for others.

Allan was a man who took his profession, family and faith seriously but not himself. His irreverent nature and love of language was captured perfectly in his official letter of resignation he sent to the ministry:

"Notice of retirement (the fat lady sings)

Oh! how that fat lady sings,
of V.R.O.'s and V.E.O.'s,
and all of those things
that retirement brings.

I must listen to her song,
Alas, it's time to move along.

1989 03 31 is the date
I have picked to terminate.
It's option one,
And the fun has just begun.

And, so from thereon
Please colour me gone!

But e'r I go,
I must let you know
That the M.T.O.
Was a jolly good show!
(I loved her so.)"
