

Leonard Putnam Stidwill, O.L.S.
June 24th 1918 – September 27th 2004



My brother Kirk and I were asked to write a biography about our Father in the winter of 2004/2005 just a few months after he had passed away. At the time it was very difficult to put pen to paper or to even talk to anyone about him. How does someone express their thoughts about their hero / dad / teacher / advisor / friend and most of all Father at a time when you find it so hard to say good-bye? So we passed only to promise to reproach the biography at a later date.

My brother started to comprise this article and added more information with each passing day. It wasn't until recently after the birth of my own daughter that I realized the need to honour our Father. So together we compiled a brief biography of the measure of the man.

He was born in Cornwall June 24, 1918, Elementary and Secondary Schools in Cornwall and graduated gold medallist from the Civil Engineering program at Queens University at Kingston in 1943. After graduation he served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Engineers from 1943 until the end of the war in 1945. With his severance pay he bought his first level and transit from the army and proceeded to set up his own Civil Engineering practice in Cornwall under L.P. Stidwill Limited. At almost the same time he started his articles to the late N.B. MacRostie and received his commission as an Ontario Land Surveyor in 1947. His business name was later changed to Stidwill & Associates Consulting Civil Engineers and Ontario Land Surveyors and then partnered with Larry Smith (Civil Engineer and OLS) to form Stidwill & Smith Civil Engineers and Ontario Land Surveyors. His son Kirk as K.L. Stidwill, Engineers and Surveyors now survives the firm. He truly enjoyed living and working in Cornwall and Eastern Ontario and I doubt there isn't a survey monument or boundary line that was not measured or set that doesn't owe some small credit to him. There is something to be said for a man that can grow up and raise his family in the same community as his birth.

He was a prominent member of the Cornwall business community and past President of the Cornwall Businessmen's Club and the Cornwall Golf and Country Club. He was also a former member of the Board of Directors of the Cornwall Curling Club, member of St. Paul's United Church, of the Cornwall Police Commission, former Trustee of St. Lawrence High School, former member Raisin Region Conservation

Authority, member of the Professional Engineer's of Ontario and an inductee into Cornwall's Sports Hall of Fame. It was often said that had it not been for World War II, he would have been asked to try out for the Canadian Olympic Track and Field Team. I am reminded of one story he told me about a track meet in Montreal (or was it Ottawa?) that he attended. He represented his high school well and as a result Cornwall Collegiate Institute ended up in, I believe, Third or Fourth place overall. Our father was the only representative from his school at the meet.

He was a very active member in the Community of Cornwall and there were very few people that didn't know him and many more who wanted too. But, I believe he received his true enjoyment in life in being with his sweetheart and watching their children grow and experience life. Like every parent he instilled a sense of self worth in each of us to try to achieve the very best that we could and most of all enjoy the journey as we travelled the road of life.

Following his retirement in 1993 he devoted his time to his family and friends and the pursuit of his second favourite pastime the perfect golf swing. He shot his first hole in one at age 83 and the next year he shot a score of one under his age.

Leonard Putnam Stidwill, BSc., P.Eng., OLS (Civil Engineering) passed away at his residence in Cornwall, ON, on September 27, 2004 at the age of 86 years surrounded by his loving family. Beloved husband of Ruth Kirkey, his high school sweetheart and loved father of Karen, Architect (Fanis Grammenos), Ottawa; Kirk, P.Eng., OLS, (Frances), Williamstown; John, P.Eng., BSc., Civil Engineering, (Catherine), Ottawa; Lorne, BA, Ottawa; Gordon, P.Eng., BSc., Civil Engineering, (Carol), Cornwall; Robb, Dr., (Laurie), Pembroke, New Hampshire; Kent BA Education, (Dorice), Cornwall; Grant P.Eng., BSc., Civil Engineering, OLS, (Sunnie), Oakville; and 23 grandchildren. Predeceased by one son Frank P.Eng., BSc., Civil Engineering, OLS, (Leslie), Cornwall, his parents Frank and Evelyn (Armstrong) Stidwill, two brothers Benson and William Stidwill and by one sister Erma Saunders (George).

As you can see by our formal education our father had a great influence on our lives. I think in some small way we all wanted to be him as we pursued our own goals and became, for the most part, an engineering and surveying family.

There isn't a day that doesn't go by that we don't think of him or the gregarious laugh and smile he had for us every time we talked.

We love you dad and miss you very much.

Kirk & Grant Stidwill