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John F. Weston P. Eng. O.L.S.
1911 - 1988

My first introduction to this venerable gentleman occurred on a really blustery, cold and most miserable morning in February 1953 at the Road Allowance between Lots 170 and 171, Concession North of the Talbot Road in the Geographic Township of Middleton. We were involved in D.H.O. contracts and Verne McCutcheon set up the meeting because my alignment of the road and Mr. Weston's did not agree. J.F. (as he was called by his friends and survey personnel) jumped out of his station wagon, as I pulled in behind it, and gave me an ultimatum. "This is a single front concession - not double. Go back to school." With that, he jumped back in his station wagon and roared off in a cloud of snow. Obviously, J.F. did not suffer fools gladly.

On my first visit to his office to request survey information I was greeted with "What do you want"? After my apology for being so stupid in February, and learning I was an Army-type, (he had held the rank of Captain in the Light Aid Detachment of an Engineering Unit) he warmed up a little and offered advice on my problems. His parting remark has stayed with me. "Remember, there are two types of surveyors, those that are professional and those that are measurers. You had better make your mind up today what you will be." I did.

Over the years I learned that J.F. was 30-40 years ahead of his time. His attitude towards things to do with surveying was quite remarkable, willing to try anything new that was advertised to find better and more efficient means for his staff to accomplish their work, and woe to the manufacturer whose specifications did not measure up. J.F. would write them a letter listing the deficiencies of the product and suggesting means to enhance it. His keen interest in photography and its application to field and office produced many "works of art" with the use of half-tones and screening, years before anyone else came up with the idea.

His biggest problem (as he referred to it) was to get the legal profession and others dealing in land to accept the fact the fences of long standing and agreed to by the adjacent owners in absence of previous monumentation delineated boundaries. "The deed" he would say, "just another piece of paper. Not worth much really". J.F. was a man who had worn many hats in his lifetime, and the

background he had acquired in Cost Analysis and Plant Engineering Accountancy became a singular part of his Surveying/Engineering practice. I really do believe he could tell you the actual cost of any survey right down to the amount of plastic flagging consumed. Most of us could guess at these expenses - but he knew. Part of his formal education included Business Administration, and he applied that knowledge to his practice in many different ways with great success. He was the first surveyor that I knew who established a complete set of Co-ordinated Survey Monuments in and around his home town of Tillsonburg out to where he judged expansion would take place, (which it did), and played an integral part in the establishment of survey monuments at all block corners within the Town. No mean feat for the early 1950's, all on a fully documented and balanced co-ordinate system, which he insisted his staff use for each and every survey.

His continued development through a programme of self-administered Continuation Education was part of his life; reading every publication possible relating to surveying; discussing with suppliers new products (and proposing better ones); talking to Land Registrars and solicitors regarding land tenure; arguing with his staff about the "best" way of doing things; setting standards for his practice that far exceeded the A.O.L.S. standards of the day.

His philosophies about his profession are now being taken into practice as a set standard, but J.F. held very strong views about his way of life over 25 years ago. His attitude toward providing professional service never wavered and he expected, and received, a fee that covered all the responsibility and all the liability for the work undertaken. In this I remember his argument very well because he espoused it so many times, "if you do not set reasonable fees you cannot pay quality people to do quality work".

J.F.'s arguments were always well thought out and very well rehearsed, and if by chance you did find a chink in his armor his eyes would glint and you had to think real fast to get the best of the discussion.

One of his lasting "beefs" from his early years in the profession was the lack of Continuing Education for all members and the absence of a strong policy to enforce it, and the monitoring of members and staff. When informed of the Seminars on Continuing Education he would read the hand-outs avidly and then send me little notes of how they could be enhanced. His comments regarding the Party Chief Seminars were, "Well, about time" and "We should include...." and "Why don't we ...".

J.F. and his wife Nora raised a healthy family of four girls and two boys, and they can give a more balanced look at his life and times, in Kinsmen, Photography, the National Campers and Hikers Association, and a host of other activities. However, we all can agree that he dedicated his life to the profession of Land Surveying.

We all miss him. He was an outstanding O.L.S.