

GEORGE LAWRENCE

George Lawrence was born in Airdrie, Scotland on May 30, 1922. He resided in Rothesay, Scotland for most of his early life. Enlisting in 1939, George served with the British Army through the Second World War. His army unit was transferred to Arbroath. He later served in Italy in Europe, Egypt and Libya in the Middle East and Britain. After the war, he returned to Rothesay (as he called it, the beautiful Isle of Bute), where he met the love of his life, Betty. In 1949, they married and resided in Glasgow. They were together for 44 years until Betty's passing.

In November 1951, George immigrated to Transcona, Manitoba to set up a new home for his family. Betty and his children followed four months later in February 1952. Upon arrival in Transcona, he worked at the CNR Shops and then later worked for Winnipeg Transit until his retirement in 1987. George was also an active member of the Masons Kilcona Lodge #183.

As a youth in Scotland, George had learned to play bagpipes with the Boys Brigade in Rothesay. He continued his love of piping after moving to Canada by being involved with organizations that promoted Scottish culture, and many pipe bands as pipe major and instructor. He joined the Canadian Reserves and became a member of the 402 Air Squadron, CFB Winnipeg as a Master Warrant Officer. The bands that George was involved with include 402 Air Reserve Squadron, Transcona Junior Pipe Band, Crusaders Pipe Band and the Transcona and District Pipe Band. George traveled to Scotland with the Transcona and District Pipe Band on four occasions. He retired from the Transcona and District Pipe Band as pipe major in 2002. George was instrumental in forming the Prairie Pipe Band Association of Manitoba, holding every executive position numerous times. He also participated as a piping judge.

George always believed in the importance of starting bagpipes at a young age and over the years, is responsible for teaching many young Winnipeg pipers. He placed a lot of emphasis on technique. He made sure a student was well versed in the exercises before moving on to learning tunes. This love of teaching was strong and he continued to teach students until shortly before his death on May 13, 2011.

George has been the recipient of many awards and honours related to his community service promoting Scottish Culture. He was not only an excellent, dedicated teacher, but respected within the community as a selfless citizen. One of his awards was from the St. Andrew's Society of Winnipeg.

George is survived by his daughters, Iris McKay and Jean (Barry) Stibbard, 3 grandsons and great grandchildren.

Information compiled from Mr. Lawrence's 2011 obituary, and excerpts from an exposé on one of his students and friend, Heather Wiens.

<http://www.bagpipepublishing.com/heatherwiens.html>