

Ray Guay

At his funeral, the priest referred to Ray Guay as “almost a Renaissance man.” That elicited many smiles – those who didn’t know Ray well were touched. Those who did could almost hear his unprintable reaction.

Ray cultivated his curmudgeonly attitude, almost revelling in his “grumpy old man” persona. But those who were patient enough, and brave enough, soon saw through his crusty exterior to find a kind and generous soul.

He was born in Hull in 1924, growing up a devout French-speaking Catholic. He came very close to joining the priesthood, but a day after his 18th birthday in 1942, he joined the RCAF. His training as a medic was given in English only. He overcame that obstacle and became an officer, spending a great deal of his time flying around the country to decommission various bases.

During this time, he grew to learn and love his second language, eventually becoming a writer and executive at many Western Canadian newspapers over his subsequent career in journalism.

He covered sports for the Calgary Herald, travelling by train to follow football, baseball, wrestling and boxing – providing fodder for many a great yarn. His time in Saskatchewan was spent as a publisher, managing editor, columnist and all-around great newsman in Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and Regina. In the last years of his working life, he was on Parliament Hill, writing about another of his passions – politics.

He met thousands of people – from prime ministers and premiers to quarterbacks and shortstops.

As a boss, he was demanding, but was fondly remembered by those he mentored. One prominent Ottawa journalist came to his funeral because he “had to be there.” Ray gave him his first job in Moose Jaw in 1969. Another, now the editor of a daily newspaper, wrote from Regina: “I have never forgotten how much I owed to Ray for my career in newspapers, and I’ve been ‘living the dream’ for a lot of years.”

Unfortunately, he lost touch with his Quebec relatives over the years, but married in Saskatchewan and was the father of two children.

After retirement, and a move to Richmond in 1991, he delighted in his garden and the many friends he made in the community. He was rarely without a book in his hand – and his tastes were eclectic – from history and war to gardening and dogs.

A proud member of Legion Branch 625, he also volunteered at the Richmond library, community police office and behind the scenes at St. Philips Roman Catholic Church. He was also a strong supporter of Friends of Hospice Ottawa.

Ray died on April 29, 2010 at the age of 85 and will be forever loved by Lynne Owen and missed by all who were lucky enough to call him friend.

