

Francis Vernon Leonard

Newspaper Obituary

Francis Vernon Leonard was born in Vancouver to Frank and Alma. He passed away peacefully in Victoria surrounded by his family. He leaves his wife of 70 years Clara, son Frank (Jackie), daughter Teresa (Dale), six grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his brother Stan. He worked most of his life in the tire business, eventually owning and operating three Victoria Tire stores in Greater Victoria. He and Clara enjoyed motorhome trips to California, cruises and many trips to Hawaii. His true passion was the time spent with family at his home in Saanich or summer home on Shawnigan Lake. He lived a full life with no regrets and will be missed by his family and all that knew him. A private service will be held for family.

Blog

[Frank Leonard & Associates](#)

[August 18, 2021](#)

Dad was born in Vancouver on January 27, 1930 to Frank Leonard and his wife Alma. Frank Leonard died when Dad was a young infant as his lungs suffered from working at Britannia Mines and being gassed at Ypres in WWI. Alma soon married Frank Gowan and Dad and his brother Stan grew up in Kitsilano while his stepdad operated a gift shop at Prospect Point in Stanley Park.

Unfortunately, Frank Gowan died when Dad was a teenager so he quit high school to support his Mom and brother. Dad would sometimes say he'd done well for a kid that started out with a single mother on welfare.

Dad worked at a flower shop, had other odd jobs and then met my mother Clare while managing a Moose Club bar and dance lounge. Mom and Dad were married in 1951 and celebrated their 70th anniversary in May 2021. Dad was working for the Nutty Club when I was born in 1954 and his father-in-law and tire dealer Eddie Akwa insisted he learn the tire business as he believed no one could raise a family selling peanuts to corner stores. By the time my sister Teresa was born in 1958 Dad was working his way up with BC Tire, Commercial Tire and eventually Goodyear.

We moved to Richmond around 1959 and Dad was an Assistant Manager at a very large Goodyear store at Broadway and Fir in Vancouver. In 1962 he was promoted to manage a new Goodyear store at Commercial and Hastings and then in 1964 Goodyear transferred him to Vernon to take over a tire store they had seized on behalf of the creditors. We were in Vernon and the Coldstream for five years during which time Dad was active in the business community and enjoyed competing against Kal Tire.

Transferred to Victoria in 1969, Dad once again took over a firm seized on behalf of the creditors and sold off Victoria Tire's up-island locations to solidify the business in downtown Victoria. When Goodyear told him his next transfer was to Toronto, he said he wanted off the corporate train and ultimately bought not only the Victoria business but the property. Dad was loyal to his Goodyear roots and operated as a franchise for them but also reached out to his former friendly competitor from Vernon and finished up operating three Kal Tire franchise stores in Victoria, Central Saanich and Langford by the time he retired in 1996.

Dad golfed a bit when we lived in Richmond and Vernon, mostly for business reasons. He really enjoyed getting into lake fishing on Sunday mornings in the North Okanagan and carried on with some salmon fishing when we moved to Victoria. His best friend was Mel who worked for Dad in Vancouver, lived

across the back fence in Richmond, quit his job so that he could work for Dad in Vernon and then quit his job again so that he could work for Dad in Victoria. Mel, Dad and I were the fishing trio starting with a small cartop boat in the Okanagan and then getting larger boats for fishing off the Sooke area.

Early in the 1970's we spotted Shawnigan Lake as a getaway and Dad bought a trailer lot in a strata park. We liked it so much that Dad bought the lot next to ours and we had room for quite an extended family. Then one day he bought a house in the lake's West Arm and this became the family summer home for many years.

Mom and Dad did travel a bit over the years – smaller budgets had us camping, then tent trailering, and as Teresa and I grew up, moved out, etc. ... the two of them had a motor home for trips to California. Then as our business became established Mom and Dad would get a month at a time in Hawaii and ultimately Maui became their favourite spot – even during the odd hurricane.

Upon retirement, the two of them had big plans for travel but Mom had a stroke and Dad's heart condition would hold him back. The new truck and fifth wheel trailer never got the workout they intended and retirement years were with family on the Island.

Fortunately, Dad sold the family home in the Northridge neighbourhood early in their retirement and bought a patio home that was fully accessible in the Quadra area. As they both lived into their 90's this was a perfect abode for them to 'age in place' and host visits by children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and great-grandchildren.

During 2020, Mom and Dad were interviewed by a local author so we could have some of their history recorded. Dad closed off the sessions with this:

“Our lives have been good and we’ve been very happy and very lucky. If anything bad ever happened, and it must have done, I’ve forgotten about it. I just let it all go. It was not worth worrying about it because we must have come through it all right at the time.”

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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