

Glenn Keith Cowan

Glenn Keith Cowan, C.M., passed away July 19, 2005 at Victoria General Hospital after a long illness. Mr. Cowan is survived by his wife of 62 years, Elizabeth (nee McCarter) of Victoria, and daughters, Sandra E. Cowan of Victoria and Sally Mitchell (Bruce) of Snyder, New York and two grandchildren. A lifelong champion of Canadian unity, Mr. Cowan was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada in 1995 for his years of tireless work in creating a campaign and directing the circulation of the "People to People Petition for Canadian Unity, " in which he sought to encourage Canadians "to cherish their differences rather than regard them with suspicion. " Mr. Cowan's persistence in circulating the Petition during the 1970s and 1980s, through countless speeches, media interviews, telephone calls and letters, laid the foundation for his book, "My Canada Mon Pays Le Canada, " which was published in 1984. The book, compiled and edited by Mr. Cowan, featured the contributions of numerous "ordinary and extraordinary " Canadians, each describing their convictions about Canada and what it means to be Canadian. The book includes contributions by such extraordinary Canadians as Wayne Gretzky, David Suzuki, and Tommy Douglas. An admirer of the courage and determination of Terry Fox and other cancer patients, Mr. Cowan donated the royalties from "My Canada Mon Pays Le Canada " to the Terry Fox Foundation and to the Roger Doucet Humanitarian Fund □ all in support of cancer research and treatment. Born July 9, 1917 in Rainy River, Ontario, Mr. Cowan spent most of his youth in Hamilton, Ontario, where his father, the Very Reverend Dr. C.L. Cowan, who later became Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, was Minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Mr. Cowan's father had named him Glenn Keith so that he would have the same initials as the muchadmired theologian of that time, G.K. Chesterton. Glenn Keith Cowan attended McGill University in Montreal where he entered a premedical program, earning a Bachelor of Science

degree. He later studied theology at Presbyterian College in Montreal. While at McGill, Mr. Cowan served as President of the student body and was a champion long-distance runner. In 1940, Mr. Cowan became the Canadian Champion in the ten-mile race and, had it not been for the Second World War and the cancellation of the 1940 Olympics, he would have represented Canada in the area of track and field in that year's Olympics. In 1943, Mr. Cowan graduated from officer's training at Royal Roads, serving initially at the Esquimalt base. He and Elizabeth Ann McCarter of Victoria, B.C. were married in March 1943. Mr. Cowan served overseas for the duration of the Second World War, where he was an officer "on loan" to the British Navy. He served on a convoy bringing supplies to Murmansk in Russia and later served in South Asia. While in India, he had an opportunity to meet the great leader, Mahatma Gandhi, as well as leaders from other segments of Indian politics, such as Muslim Chief, Mahomed Ali Jinnah, Jawaharlal Nehru, and the leader of the Untouchables, Rajagopalachariar. He wrote several articles for Maclean's Magazine, Saturday Night and the Toronto Star on the political situation in India. Deeply affected by the atrocities and loss of life he witnessed during the Second World War, Mr. Cowan decided that, upon his return to Canada, he would devote the rest of his life to the promotion of peace in the world. Following his return from India in 1946, Mr. Cowan settled in Hamilton, Ontario with his young family, where he commuted to Toronto to finish his degree in theology at Knox College. Mr. Cowan then entered the world of private industry, where he first worked in public relations in Montreal and later in labour-management relations in Windsor, Ontario. Mr. Cowan's peaceful convictions led him to vigorously pursue, during his years in private industry, improvements in the advancement of communications between labour and management. Mr. Cowan left private industry in 1962 to serve in the federal government, where he became acting head of the newly-created National Productivity Council in Ottawa. The Council eventually evolved into the Economic Council, where Mr. Cowan concentrated in the areas of

industrial relations and labour management issues, as well as productitivity concerns. He was later invited to work with the government of Prince Edward Island where he developed a model for civil service labour negotiations based on British government practices. PEI continues to use this model. Glenn Keith Cowan was also involved in drug education with the PEI government, developing programs and presenting drug education seminars to 200 high schools in the Atlantic Provinces. During the 1970s he travelled to Washington, D.C. to speak before a Senate subcommittee on the use of drugs and the importance of drug education. After retiring in 1977, Mr Cowan moved with his wife, Elizabeth, to her hometown of Victoria, B.C. During his retirement, Mr. Cowan continued his passionate involvement in national issues and was particularly interested in the issue of Canadian unity. He led a campaign to persuade Quebecers that the rest of the country wanted them to remain part of Canada ("People to People Petition for Canadian Unity, " 1980). After a nationwide campaign, Mr. Cowan managed to obtain more than one milllion signatures on the petition. The petition was then brought to Quebec by a number of mayors and families from across Canada and was presented to officials and to the people of Quebec in a ceremony at Place Ville Marie in Montreal prior to the 1980 national referendum on Canadian unity. During his retirement, Mr. Cowan also worked tirelessly in the area of drug education, continuing the work he had begun in Prince Edward Island. He also edited a guidebook to Victoria, "The Victoria Handbook, " which was published in 1986. He served for a number of years as an elder of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Saanich and was a longtime member of the Rotary Club. A Memorial Service will be held at 2:30 p.m., Saturday, July 23, 2005, at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 2964 Tillicum Road (near Gorge Road). In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the Terry Fox Foundation.