J.H. “Rocky” Forest

Rocky was born in 1921 on the family farm in LaSalle Manitoba. He was the 4th of 9 children born to Metis and French parents Elise and Gabriel Forest. He attended the one-room Barkham schoolhouse where he acquired the first of his nicknames: “Harry”. He attended high school in neighbouring St. Norbert. Following high school, he worked underground in a gold mine in Northern Manitoba – and it was there he acquired the nickname that would stick with him for life: “Rocky”.

In 1940, Rocky enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy. He trained in St. Hyacinthe Quebec and then served on both the Pacific and the North Atlantic until the end of the 2nd world war. Returning home as a commissioned naval officer, Rocky used his Serviceman’s Grant to build a new home on the family farm for his parents and younger siblings.

Near the family farm was the one-room schoolhouse that Rocky had attended in his youth. It was there that he met the beautiful, intelligent, young new teacher Jean Janz who was then instructing Rocky’s younger siblings. Jean would quickly become the love of his long life and his faithful wife of 69 years. Having seen the Rocky Mountains on a Navy transfer during the war, he knew he wanted to move to Alberta. Rocky and Jean were married on December 21st, 1946 and set off for Edmonton to begin their new life together.

Rocky learned carpentry and worked for Poole Construction Ltd. (PCL) and developed many friendships there. Alberta had just drilled its first successful oil well. Ever the visionary,

Rocky saw the opportunity for growth, struck out on his own and founded Forest Construction Ltd. in 1952. He grew his business and eventually competed against PCL for construction contracts. It's an interesting full circle story that nearing its 50th anniversary, Forest Construction was sold to PCL. A good match indeed, 50 years in the making – Competitors and Friends.

A growing economy, a growing business, and most importantly a growing family. Over the years he built 3 different family homes in Edmonton to accommodate Jean and their 7 children. Life was good and he eventually built a summer cottage on Lake Wabamun where he taught all of the children to sail and water ski.

Rocky's first large construction contract was the building of the Assumption Catholic Church in Edmonton– the first of dozens of churches he would eventually build.

As his company grew, so did the size of his projects. Forest Construction Ltd. would eventually build over 700 hundred major buildings in Alberta and BC including schools, offices, shopping centers, arenas, condominium towers, hotels, hospitals, airports, warehouses and industrial buildings. He led several industry associations and served on the Advisory Council to the Federal Business Development Bank.

Rocky was a founding partner of Jas-Day Investments Ltd. and built the Lobstick Lodge in his beloved Rocky Mountains so that more Canadians could enjoy "his" special mountain range. His friendships in Jasper National Park would endure for decades and the business grew to become today's Mountain Park Lodges hotel chain. Rocky happily taught many kids to ski at Marmot Basin, a ski resort that Mountain Park Lodges would eventually invest in.

Rocky was an active member of his church and community as a founding member of The Marion Centre and of the Edmonton

Community Foundation. He was a board member of both the Misericordia Hospital and of CUSO (Canadian University Students Overseas), Chairman of Edmonton Catholic Charities, and President of The United Way. His encouragement of the arts was recognized with his appointment as Honourary Director of the Citadel Theatre.

Of particular note was Rocky's support for women and children in need – long before this type of support became fashionable. He was a founder of the registered non-profit WINGS of Providence: "Women-In-Need-Growing-Stronger". Rocky spearheaded a project to obtain an apartment building and convert it into a refuge for women escaping family violence. Wings now provides second stage and longer term housing as well as daycare facilities. It's a rare surprise honour indeed for a Man to have a day care named after him!

He also had a special place in his heart for the needs of religious sisters. He donated countless hours and dollars to building their convents, schools and the spiritual retreat facilities they operated for the community. A very special project of Rocky's was the development and construction of a beautiful monastery west of Edmonton for the Carmelite Sisters, who upon its completion came from all over the world to quietly live and pray in Alberta.

Rocky and Jean retired to a lovely retirement condo in downtown Edmonton, but soon he would fulfill a lifelong dream of living on the West Coast. Who else but Rocky Forest would have the energy to move out of a retirement residence, change provinces, and buy a heritage fixer-upper in Victoria that would take 2 full years to restore!

Rocky was a green thumb and a true artist. His intricate and realistic bird carvings grace his children's homes. He was a 50 year supporter of his beloved Edmonton Eskimos Football Club and a long time patron of the Edmonton Opera. In addition to numerous local and industry awards, Rocky was one

of twenty five people to receive The Canadian Citation For Citizenship.

Jean and her children wish to thank the staff at Berwick House and Sunrise Senior Living for all of their assistance and kindness, their Pastors for their spiritual guidance, and Dr. Keith McQueen for his years of encouragement and peerless medical care. At the time of his death, Rocky was surrounded by his devoted wife Jean and several of their children.

Jean's and the family's biggest thanks are reserved for Rocky's youngest daughter Rosalyn, who selflessly and tirelessly cared for her Dad every day for many years. At the age of 94, on December 16th, 2015, Rocky passed away peacefully – secure in Rosalyn's loving arms.

Joseph Hyacinthe "Rocky" Forest leaves to mourn his faithful wife Jean who lovingly cared for him for 69 years. Also morning are his 7 adoring children, Ric (Jayne), Leanne (Wes), Dan (MaryLou), Michelle (Peter), Karen, Rosalyn (David), and Tom (Lynne). Rocky never failed to inspire his 11 grandchildren, Michael (Christina), Nicole (Kevin), Brad (Charlotte), Kim (Brigitte), Damian (Christie), Kira (Mike), Dominique, Elise, Adrianna (Brad), Megan and Elodie. Rocky's great delight were his 11 great grandchildren, Rebecca, Samantha, Ryan, Payton, Warner, Morgan, Kayla, Adelaide, Liam, Gabriella and Keira. Rocky is survived by his brother Gabriel (Marcelle) and his sisters–in-law Rita, Anita, Louise and Cathy as well as by dozens of nieces and nephews who have written often to their special "Uncle Rocky". He is predeceased by his siblings and their spouses Anna and Alphonse Dufault, Laurent, Gerard and Alphonsine, Georges, Cecile and Earl Pickup, Jean-Paul and Robert.

Viewing, Vigil and Evening Prayers will be held Sunday, December 20th at 7:30 PM. A Mass Of Christian Burial will be held Monday, December 21st at 11:00 AM followed by a lunch and

reception in the adjoining church hall. Both services will be held at Holy Cross Catholic Church, 4049 Gordon Head Road, Victoria, BC.

The Alberta celebration of Rocky's life will take place in Edmonton in the Spring of 2016. Rocky's ashes will be buried at Holy Cross Edmonton Catholic Cemetery – a beautiful property that he himself developed and built some 40 years ago.

In lieu of flowers, please continue Rocky's work of helping Women and Children in need with a donation to his favorite charity: WINGS and the Rocky Forest Daycare. wingsofprovidence.ca

Condolences can be offered to the family below.

McCall's Funeral Home
www.mccallbros.com.