Maurice Armand Tremblay

Maurice was born on February 26, 1932, at St. Paul's hospital in Vancouver. His parents moved the family around the Fraser Valley and settled in North Vancouver's Lynn Valley and were closely connected to the Catholic community. He attended elementary school at St. Edmonds where he needed to take a streetcar every day. Later he attended North Vancouver High School. The year he graduated he was doing exams while the Fraser River was flooding and he hated ignoring the call for help sandbagging the banks of the Fraser. University was not an option because the war veterans were returning home and university seats were taken. He preferred physical work anyway and went to the Okanagan to pick peaches and other fruit which he loved. He got a construction job on the emerging Hope to Princeton Highway, but he was not allowed to do heavy work because he was only 17. He tried logging after that and never left.

Maurice said that there were 3 careers he wanted to try: farming, fishing and logging. He did all 3 as a child living in North Vancouver's Lynn Valley where Argyle School sits now. He raised chickens and sold to his parents, he fished Lynn Creek and once nearly drowned, and with help he built a small log cabin. The neighbour, Mr. Richardson, had a brother who had a small logging outfit near Jervis Inlet, so Maurice started logging there. He signed up with BC Forest Products and was sent to logging camps that either used the CPR ferry or a float plane to get to. Eventually around 1954, he was assigned to Vancouver Island and Camp 6, or Caycuse. After that it was Port Renfrew's Harris Creek Camp. Then Harris and Bear Creek camps moved to "Beach Camp", the logging rails were taken up and the passenger and freight ship stopped going around Vancouver Island. The Port Renfrew-Shawnigan Lake Road was the first road, but Sooke and Lake Cowichan followed in the late 50's. Maurice was a logger called a hooktender and

high rigger in Port Renfrew into the 1980's. The high rigger part of his logging job started with climbing a huge tree with an axe hanging from his belt. [Michael says he was never allowed to touch that axe!] Using belt and spurs, Maurice made his way up the tree, chopping limbs as he went. The tree was used as a wooden spar tree, and soon after were replaced with steel spars. The heavy steel lines go through it and logs are yarded along, all centred on the spar tree. He also used his rigging skills for painting the San Juan Bridge – twice. He was suspended on a swing seat and used ropes to get around to paint the bridge. Another time a sailboat was towed into Port Renfrew after being adrift for months with tangled sails. Maurice used another swing seat and pulley system to go up and untangle the mess.

Maurice lived in the bunkhouse at Harris Creek Camp until he was married. He married Lucille Van Nes in April 1957, she finished her first teaching job in Chemainus and joined him in Port Renfrew in a "little red house." They were assigned a bigger house and lived there when Anne was born in 1962 and Angie in 1964. In 1966, they were assigned the "doctors" house just before Michael was born. In about 1970 the logging company, BCFP, decided to sell the houses and Maurice arrived at the logging office on day 1 with a stack of $100 bills for the $12,000 house.

He added to his work hobbies with hand splitting shakes with a mallet and fro, using the net shed on the Port Renfrew Government wharf and donating it to re-roofing the Port Renfrew Community Hall, which burned down around 1982. He periodically cut shakes by hand into his 80's. Then he dabbled in cutting lumber.

In 1970 his daughter Angie died of childhood leukemia, and he dealt with it with a new work hobby, cutting lumber on the beach using an Alaska Mill powered with a big 090 Skihl chain saw. He used the lumber to build an addition in all directions on the house. He had to learn a lot about carpentry and

several relatives were called over to provide skills like wiring or plastering.

Briefly in the 50’s in his boat “the Lucky Louie” he was part of the west coast “putt-putt league” of commercial fisherman, but it soon ended and he never sold a single fish. He also weighed in fish in his carport for local sports fishermen which he recorded in a logbook. Based on those numbers he projected run sizes and recognized a decline in stock. In the 1970’s this decline happened everywhere in BC and with funding he started the Four Mile Creek Salmon Hatchery. It grew over time and was mor productive than he ever imagined. He never ever took wages from it, but his wife Lucille ended up with a job after years of volunteering. It turned into his second career, and he did not give it up until he was about 88 years old when he turned it over to Shane and Lisa. There were many fisheries people and too many volunteer helpers to count that helped with the salmon hatchery over the years and most would agree that he was great to work with.

Maurice never had political aspirations, but he was on several boards of directors over the years. The Port Renfrew Church, St. Mary’s Ecumenical. The Lake Cowichan Catholic Church, St. Louis de Momford. After his wife Lucille died, he was a weekly reader there until COVID happened. When Port Renfrew changed from a logging camp overseen by the logging company, BCFP in the 80’s he was on the evolving local services committee and eventually commission. He tried to keep the municipal water bill from going too high. BCFP workers had a union, the IWA. Maurice was camp steward during the mid-70’s.

There was another project that he was involved in over the years, clearing the log jam on the San Juan River to allow returning salmon to get through and to stop high flooding on Island Road properties. He combined his goal of farming, fishing and logging when his wife Lucille bought acreage on Island Road. It has key access to the river and logjam while providing farmland. The trifecta for his life goals. The

property was used effectively for logjam removal and fish survived because of it. The farming was less successful because every fruit tree planted was eaten by elk. So, he switched to cutting the acres of lawn and piling grass clippings for the elk to sleep on, and they did.

Maurice had some rules to live by such as live and let live.

Treat others as you would have them treat you.

Find work that you enjoy and vary the pace on the weekends.

Variety is the spice of life – but monotony brings home the bacon.

The secret to staying dry is to put your rain clothes on BEFORE you get wet!

He was loved and will be missed. A special thank you to the kind staff at Luther court, hospital staff and wonderful paramedic team. Maurice left for hospital from Port Renfrew in November with transport in the air ambulance helicopter and was thrilled. He declined further and was in long term care at Luther Court for only 2 weeks when he passed away.

In Lieu of flowers please consider donating to the diabetes or cancer funds.

A Funeral Service will be held in the Sequoia Centre at McCall Gardens, 4665 Falaise Drive, Victoria, BC on Saturday, January 31st, 2026, at 2:00 pm, followed by a Graveside Service at Royal Oak Burial Park, 4673 Falaise Drive, Victoria BC. A reception will follow back in the Sequoia Centre. To send photos or let us know you are coming, please use tremblaymemorial@gmail.com

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens
www.mccallgardens.com

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