

# Melville Bertram (Mel) Couvelier

January 20, 1931 – May 30, 2011

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Melville Bertram Couvelier, who died peacefully on Monday, May 30, 2011 in Saanich at the age of 80. Predeceased by his parents George and Hilda and his sister Lynn, Mel will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 63 years, Mildred (Milly), sister Jill Mead (Godfrey), children Richard (Christine), Rodney (Debbie) and Melissa Safarik (Gordon), grandchildren Kerry (Graham), Christopher, Jennifer and Angelina, and great-grandson Daniel.

Born in Vancouver on January 20, 1931, Mel married Milly (Quakenbush) on September 17, 1948. After spending two years in Ocean Falls, where Mel worked in the offices of Crown Zellerbach, the family relocated to Vancouver and shortly thereafter Mel purchased the general store in Coal Harbour. Moving to Victoria in 1960, Mel owned and operated Maplewood Poultry Processors and later founded Couvelier's Fine Apparel.

Mel's political involvement began when he served as President of the B.C. Liberal Party in the early 1970s. Elected as a Saanich Alderman in 1974, Mel served as Mayor of Saanich from 1977 to 1986 during which time he was also President of the Union of B.C. Municipalities. As Mayor, Mel was instrumental in growing the business community in the municipality and promoting Vancouver Island during Expo 86. In 1986, Mel was elected to the B.C. Legislative Assembly, representing the riding of Saanich and the Islands as a Social Credit MLA. During his tenure as an MLA, Mel served as Minister of Finance and Corporate Relations, a position he used to balance the provincial budget, promote economic development and enhance B.C.'s presence in the Asia-Pacific region. Mel's political career was marked by a tireless work ethic, a pragmatic

approach to problem-solving, and a thoughtful desire to hear and understand all sides of a debate.

Throughout his life, Mel was known as a visionary community leader. In addition to serving as a politician, he was a Director of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, the Victoria Airport Authority, the Memorial Park Society, the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific, a co-founder of the Victoria Technology Association and a past manager of the Victoria Symphony. In his later years, Mel continued his community involvement, enjoyed his time with friends and family in Sidney, and remained an ardent fan of his beloved Toronto Blue Jays.

A celebration of Mel's life will be held at 1pm on June 17, 2011 at the Mary Winspear Centre (2243 Beacon Ave., Sidney, B.C., V8L 1W9). In lieu of flowers, donations may be made "In Memory of Mel Couvelier" to either of two organizations close to his heart: the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific (505 Quayle Rd., Victoria, B.C., V9E 2J7) or the Mary Winspear Centre (at the above address). Condolences may be offered at [www.mccallbros.com](http://www.mccallbros.com). The family would like to extend sincerest thanks to all of those who cared for Mel, especially during his stay in Palliative Care at the Saanich Peninsula Hospital.