Pierre Elliott Gauthier

Victoria, B.C. – Nearly 60 years after Pierre Elliott Gauthier made his debut as an impresario in the big leagues of national film exhibition, the closing credits have rolled on the life of Canada's longest-reigning movie theatre manager.

Pierre died from cancer complications on May 29 at age 87.

A larger-than-life character known as much for his generosity and kindness as his flamboyance and passion for delivering the quintessential moviegoing experience, Pierre lived up to his reputation as "the last showman" until he retired in 2018 as general manager of the Odeon, Cineplex Entertainment's flagship Yates street multiplex.

Born in Stewart, B.C., Pierre was raised in Quesnel by his parents Paul and Mabel. His rough-and-tumble childhood there is said to have ignited his sense of adventure and devil may-care attitude. He came from a movie theatre lineage. His grandfather purchased the Rex, Quesnel's only movie theatre, in 1918, and Pierre's father Paul went on to build the town's Carib theatre and Casbar drive-in.

Pierre and his late wife Velma worked in the theatre business together since the early 1960s. His jobs included selling encyclopedias and vacuum cleaners after moving to Calgary, where he went on to manage the Grand Theatre for 20 years and worked with Velma.

They managed several theatres between them, including the Odeon, Haida and Towne Cinema, after moving to Victoria in 1981.

Pierre's motto as a theatre operator was to "treat every customer as if they were your grandparents." When he wasn't tearing tickets and greeting customers, he followed other pursuits.

A big fan of country music and western movies, Pierre had an avid passion for western style riding. He excelled in sports including golf, and motorcycle riding. His physical and mental tenacity to survive many serious accidents was a testament to his eclectic character. Pierre's life was well lived as he personified a favourite saying: "You've just gotta grab the bull by the horns."

Pierre is survived by son Lance (Krishna) Neale and grandsons Grayson and Sam; siblings Diane (David) Jackson, Colette (Lyle) Sopel, and John Gauthier; nephews Rene (Deborah) and Kurtis (Bianca); nieces Nicole (Steve) and Julie (Jack), and many great and grand nephews and nieces.

He is pre-deceased by his parents Paul and Mabel, stepmother Kay, his wife Velma, brother Michael (Carol) and nephew Andre (Brenda).

A public Celebration of Life will take place on Friday, June 19, 2026 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm, at the Inn at Laurel Point, 680 Montreal Street, Victoria, B.C.

In lieu of flowers, a donation made in Pierre's name to Victoria Therapeutic Riding Club, Kiwanis Youth Club or a charity of your own choosing would be appreciated.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

McCall Gardens
www.mccallgardens.com

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