

ON THE FRONT COVER: LESLIE RAYMOND PETERSON, Q.C., LL.B., LL.D

By Donald Dunfee

Leslie Raymond Peterson, better known to most of us as Les, has been many things to many people in his life.

He was born on a farm eight miles or so from Viking, Alberta on October 6, 1923 and his schooling took place in that area. He also attended Camrose Lutheran College. Les then joined the Canadian army and served overseas with the Royal Canadian Engineers, where his talents were valued to the extent that he was, for a considerable period of time, sent to the University of London at army expense. He later served in the field in Holland.

On his return to Canada, Les entered the University of British Columbia and graduated with the second law class in 1949. He married Agnes Hine at Little Mountain Camp in 1950 and their first home was on 4th Avenue near Blanca. They have two children, Raymond and Karen, and five grandchildren.

Les practised law on his own for a year or two and then joined the late R.P. (Dick) Anderson in practice in the Holden Building on East Hastings Street. This firm later merged with Boughton, Jensen and McConnell in 1956 to become known as Boughton Peterson Anderson McConnell Dunfee and Jensen. This firm name lasted for a very short time as Les, who had been elected to the provincial legislature in January 1956 in a by-election, was re-elected in the general election of September 1956 and became a cabinet minister in October of that year.

Les served as Minister of Education from 1956 to 1968 and became Attorney General in 1968, a post that he held until 1972 when he, along with his party, was defeated. While serving in these two positions he was also Minister of Labour from 1960 to 1971. He served his province with distinction and had the respect of all sides of the House.

Upon his electoral defeat he returned to the practice of law with his old law firm, then known as Boughton & Co. He quickly demonstrated that his 16-year political hiatus had not dulled his legal skills. However, the practice of law was not enough to harness all his energies and he took on many other positions.

But first there was the 1975 provincial election and his law partners watched with trepidation as great pressure was put on him to run again. Finally, I think with some help from his partners, he withstood the pressure and the law firm was able to breathe more easily.

His areas of service are many and varied but among them are his long-time service on the board of the Terminal City Club, culminating in his becoming its president. He also served on many committees and boards of the Shriners and became its potentate as head of the B.C. and Yukon branches.

The alumni of the University of British Columbia elected Les to its board in 1968 and, of course, in due time he became chairman. He is still, after 26 years, on this board. He also served on the board of governors of the university and became its chancellor in 1987, a position that he held for six years. According to university records he "tapped on the head" some 36,000 graduates during his tenure as chancellor. This fig-

ure, one would think, will be a long time in being surpassed. During his tenure he also had the honour of conferring 79 honorary doctorates.

It has not been all work, however, and Les enjoys boating, skiing, tennis and, from time to time, golf. His early days in Viking were not completely wasted and his eye behind a pool cue is pretty sharp, and, if you were to accept his offer of a small wager, you might very well see his game pick up a notch. He is also a fisherman of some renown but on outings with his partners he has, on occasion, because of his greater fame as a snorer, been relegated to the Honeymoon Cabin by himself.

All in all, it can fairly be said that, although Les has led a very busy life, it has been a well-rounded one, and he has seldom been so busy that he missed out on the joys of family life or a little fun along the way. He has, in essence, not lost the common touch.



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