

The Honourable Michelangelo Provenzano

Michelangelo (Mike) Provenzano died on October 19, 2015 aged 93. Born in Cranbrook, the third of four children of Italian immigrants, Mike and his siblings were raised by their mother after their father's suicide when Mike was a young boy. In high school, he played basketball and was the editor of the school yearbook. He graduated early during the Second World War and enlisted, becoming a flight instructor.



After the war, Mike enrolled in law school at UBC in the veterans' program, obtaining his law degree in 1949 after two years. His UBC classmates included the late Associate Chief Justice David Campbell; A.B.B. Carrothers J.A.; Jack Taggart J.A.; Valerie Taggart P.C.J.; Monte Tyrwhitt-Drake J.; B.C. Lieutenant Governor, Garde Gardom, Q.C.; and others, most of whom were war veterans. After articling to Colin D. McQuarrie of McQuarrie Hunter in New Westminster, Mike returned to Cranbrook to practise, joining Alan Graham. They were in turn joined by Alan's son, Peter, in the firm known as Graham, Provenzano and Graham. Mike's organizational skills soon resulted in him managing the firm, where, according to his son Michael, he introduced modern accounting methods such as a separate trust account for the clients' funds!

In 1963, at the age of 41, Mike was appointed to the County Court of East Kootenay (later known as the County Court of Kootenay), resident in Cranbrook. He travelled frequently to sit in the then more numerous seats of the County Court in the Kootenays, in addition to the principal courthouses in Cranbrook and Nelson: Golden, Fernie, Creston, Rossland and Grand Forks, often presiding over court in as many as three towns in a week.

"Judge P", as he was affectionately known by the court staff, often delivered oral judgments at the conclusion of a trial after only a brief adjournment to organize his thoughts. They were usually short and to the point, cutting to the essence of the issues before him. Reserved judgments were not on reserve for long. He was only infrequently appealed.

In 1987 Mike elected supernumerary status, working most of his required half-time rota in Vancouver. In 1990 he became a member of the Supreme Court of British Columbia upon the merger of the Supreme and County courts. He retired in 1992 at age 70.

Mike was fortunate to have practised law and to have sat as a judge in the part of British Columbia that he loved best. He golfed and downhill skied

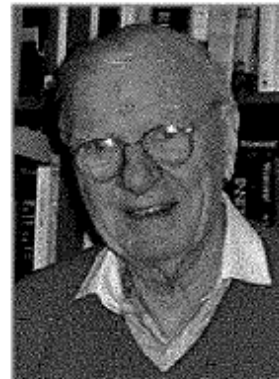
until he was 80, and enjoyed many pleasurable days at his cabin at Monroe Lake near Cranbrook. He was a creditable cook and generous host. He lived a long and full life. Predeceased by his wife, Charlotte, he is survived by his sons Michael and Philip (Christie) and grandchildren David, Katarina, Sophia and Maya.

The Honourable Thomas Melnick



Cecil O.D. Branson, Q.C.

Cecil (Cec) Branson died on October 22, 2015 after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. He is survived by his devoted wife June, son Dennis, daughter Leslie, three grandsons, one granddaughter and two great grandchildren. Cecil was one of B.C.'s leading counsel. More than that he was a serious student of the law as well as an avid tennis player.



Born and raised in Victoria, Cecil graduated from St. Michael's University School. He proved to be an able student, an excellent athlete, and was B.C. Junior Boys Tennis Champion. While at Victoria College (later UVic) he coached the girls' grass hockey team, started the Student Liberal Club and served on the student council. He worked part time at W & J Wilson men's clothing and learned a great deal about quality clothing. These were the days when male students wore shirts and ties to classes. He did like clothes; June's mother always said he was "well turned out".

Graduating from Victoria College, Cec enrolled in the Faculty of Commerce at UBC. But he withdrew after completing his third year. He returned to work full-time in the clothing business. A good friend, Alec Robertson, persuaded Cecil to consider law school. Cec had to enrol in summer school in order to qualify for law school. At summer school he met June Willis, a young widow, who was his lab partner in Geography 101. They were married in August 1959.

Cec had law in his genes. His mother was Irish. His grandfather, Jonas Blackall, was an Irish solicitor, and his uncle, Sir Henry Blackall, had been