The Man Who Changed Alberta

By **Alexa Iwanic**,

If you live in Alberta, it is hard not to have heard of Peter Lougheed. It is almost impossible to spend time in Calgary or our province without seeing evidence of his impact on our lives. Whether it be a visit to the Peter Lougheed Hospital or the Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, it is clear that he played an important role in Calgary and Alberta's past. His recent death on September 13, 2012 has reminded us of his important accomplishments and the legacy that he left behind. As you read this, try to imagine what it would be like if you were such an accomplished man like Peter Lougheed.

Peter Edgar Lougheed was born in Calgary, Alberta on July 26, 1928. He came from an important family that had lost much of its wealth during the Depression. This experience in his early years was said to have motivated him to make life better for all Albertans. He was premier of Alberta from 1971 to 1985. He is considered by some to be the greatest premier in Alberta's history. As Alberta's first Progressive Conservative premier, Lougheed is credited with important decisions that shaped today's Alberta, and in the process he convinced the rest of Canada to give us a stronger provincial voice. His style of leadership was so effective that he built the Progressive Conservative Party from nothing into a political powerhouse that has governed the province for more than 40 years.

Peter Lougheed has been called the "Father of Alberta" and even "Mr. Alberta" because of his impact on our province. His accomplishments show that he was truly a champion of Alberta. His first piece of legislation as premier was to introduce the Alberta Bill of Rights to protect individual freedoms. He started the oil sands industry and began the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund. He reformed public education with a back-to- basics junior and senior high school curriculum. He strengthened rural Alberta and even foresaw today's looming water crisis as early as 1971.

Lougheed is best remembered for two very famous political battles in Canadian history over energy and the constitution. The province's modern oil wealth is a direct benefit of his struggle to keep resource ownership in provincial hands. Also, he played a role in bringing the 1988 Olympic Winter Games to Calgary and building the Saddle Dome. This helped to land the Flames franchise in Calgary. He was appointed a Companion of the Order of Canada for his achievements.

As a junior high student, I believe there are ways that I can show leadership and strive for excellence in our community. I am a strong student academically, and I try to volunteer in the school community. I believe working hard on academics will allow me to contribute to the community when I am finished school. So far, I have been on two school teams, the basketball team and the volleyball team. Being on those teams, I have learned how important it is to be committed to a team and that discipline helps a team succeed. Peter Lougheed was an accomplished athlete, even playing professional football at one point during university. He then focussed on his academic goals in order to build an important career in law and business. In the end, his desire to make change led him to choose politics.

We are lucky to be the beneficiaries of some of his amazing accomplishments. Without all of his efforts, Calgary and Alberta would be a very different place to live in today. His impact is still being felt

as recently as last spring when he put his support behind Premier Alison Redford. As a strong defender of Alberta's interests, Peter Lougheed also had that same commitment to Canada. He believed a strong Canada required a strong Alberta. If you live in Alberta, it is hard not to have heard of Peter Lougheed.

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