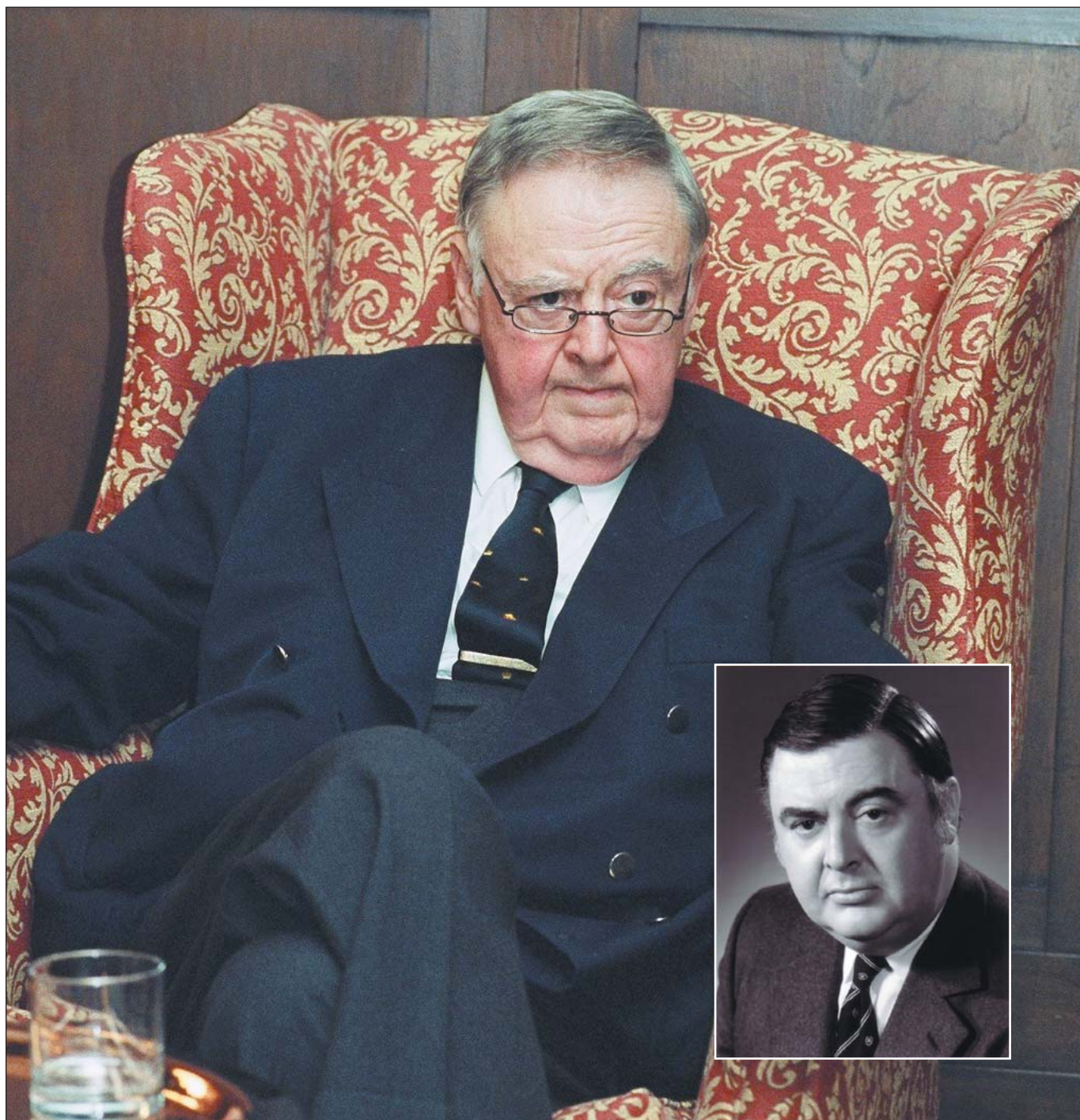


## in MEMORIAM NÉCROLOGIE

What can be written about Harry Sutherland that hasn't been said or written before in many of our philatelic publications? Actually, quite a bit...

### Harry Sutherland, QC, RDP, Hon. FRPSL, FRPSC: 1930-2006

*By Charles J. G. Verge, FRPSC, FRPSL, President and Historian, The RPSC*



Many of the biographies written about Harry Sutherland have only brushed the surface of the man, his achievements and his legacy. Part of the reason for this is that Harry himself was not forthcoming or precise with those who interviewed him. Piecing together this article has required extensive research and thanks to my library and that of the Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation's (VGG) and the many friends and acquaintances of Harry, I was able to cobble together this biography/obituary.

On May 15, 2002, I was given the privilege of introducing Harry at the Awards Dinner of the New York Collectors Club on the occasion of the presentation to him of the Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award. One of my comments was that, "In Canada, we simply don't get it. We just don't understand what the fuss is about Harry outside our borders. We just keep wondering if this man's rise to the top of the philatelic honour's list will ever be the subject of the popular TV show *Unsolved Mysteries*." That mystery was solved at his passing. The number of tributes sent to The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada's (RPSC) website ([www.rpsc.org](http://www.rpsc.org)) concerning Harry, not only from the international world but also from ordinary collectors, demonstrated Harry's legacy and his profound influence on the hobby.

Born in Toronto on April 26, 1930, he was the only child of Harry and Anne Sutherland who had moved there from New Glasgow, NS. Harry's father had come to work for the Bank of Nova Scotia. Harry attended the Institute of Child Studies of the University of Toronto – graduating at age five – and then went on to Brown School, Upper Canada College and Osgoode Law School. He articulated with the firm of Fraser Beatty and was called to the Bar in 1954, a year after he joined the Collectors Club of New York, and became a partner in 1962. He was made a Queen's Counsel in 1974 and retired



Harry and a group of fellow RDPs at Leicester during the 2005 signing ceremony.  
*Courtesy Patrick Pearson, RDP*

from Fraser Beatty in 1995 but did not physically leave his office until early in 2002. Harry edited several editions of Fraser and Stewart (both former Fraser & Beatty partners) on «Company Law in Canada», a definitive text on Canadian corporate law. Senator David Smith, at Harry's memorial service, said that Harry was a very, very good lawyer. "He gave due diligence a new meaning." Harry's full legal designation was barrister, solicitor, notary public, commissioner of oaths and a proctor of admiralty.

Thomas Jefferson once said, "It is the trade of a lawyer to question everything, yield nothing and talk by the hour." I once heard a story told by one of Harry's legal colleagues that gives a good example of Harry's putting into practice President Jefferson's dictum. The story goes that a seasoned counsel who, when he found that Harry was the opposing lawyer, was so petrified of the possibility of facing Harry in court that he instantly took up his robes and ran to the presiding judge's chambers to request an out-of-court settlement.

The first two of Jefferson's lawyer traits definitely applied to Harry but the last certainly did not, at least in the philatelic world. He weighed each word and was frequently parsimonious with them. He certainly got his ideas,

meaning and direction across with few words. At meetings, Harry would lull many newcomers into a false sense of security. He frequently had his eyes closed and seemed to be asleep but he never missed anything going on and had the uncanny knack of rejoining the conversation at a most appropriate time without having missed anything.

Harry related the story that he started collecting when his father gave him a Christmas present of stamps when he was five years old. To enumerate Harry's contributions to philately from that memorable present is to create a chronology of a first star in a hockey game. For Harry, the game has been stamps. He learned the rules early, applied them well and excelled in every facet of the hobby.

Harry's collecting interests included the stamps and postmarks of Montenegro, which started as a sideline collection. The interest grew to where it earned him Gold medals at the international level. The last being in Poland in 1993 that, interestingly enough, was the year I first started exhibiting at the international level. Christie's sold his collection in three different sales: March 26 and July 16, 1997 and July 23, 1997. He also had a postal history collection of Montenegro that he never exhibited. Copies of all of his Montenegro materials are housed in the VGG's Library. His other collecting areas were the locals of the Treaty Ports of China and the Port of Shanghai as well as German Naval Mail during World War I. Like all collectors his interests changed over the years but

Harry Sutherland at the Philatelic Specialists Society of Canada's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner.  
*Courtesy of the PSS*

(Inset): Harry as a young man when he was President of The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, circa 1967. *Courtesy of The RPSC*



Harry, in his normal curmudgeon-with-a-heart of gold personality, instructing Cimon Morin, Chief of the Canadian Postal Archives, where to sign the Roll of Fellows of The RPSC (1998).

*From the author's collection*

he always maintained a strong support for Canadian stamps and postal history. For a man who had difficulty with the concept of collecting thematics, he was a closet collector of trains on stamps. For a man who was frequently heard muttering under his breath about aerophilately, he had a collection of Canada's 1938 six-cent airmail stamp which he recently exhibited internationally at PACIFIC EXPLORER '05 in Sydney, Australia in April 2005.

Although he loved the coloured bits of paper, his major contributions to our hobby were on the organizational side. For most collectors the hobby is a solitary one. For Harry it was one of his social outlets.

He joined The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, then called the Canadian Philatelic Society, in 1954 and was elected a member of its Board of Directors in 1957. From 1957 to 2006 he was The RPSC's legal advisor and its Secretary from 1978 until this year. He also holds the record as the longest serv-

ing President of The RPSC. Having been elected in 1967, upon the death of Dr. Mac Geldert, he served as the Society's head until 1978. For many years, he was also Director of The RPSC's Arbitration Committee and Director of International Affairs.

Harry was a member of so many philatelic societies that if I listed them all and his contributions to each there would be little space left in the magazine. Here are some examples of his memberships and contributions. Harry became a member of the Philatelic Specialist Society (PSS) in 1955. He was its Secretary for three years from 1957 to 1960. He was also Vice-President in 1959 and 1960 and President in 1961 and 1962. Between April 1956 and March 1998, Harry spoke to the Society a total of 19 times, the most of any member. Four of these occasions were on his Montenegro collection mentioned above (January 21, 1976, March 21, 1979, November 16, 1988 and July 21, 1993). He joined the British North America Philatelic Society in October 1965 and served on their Board of Governors from January 1, 1982 to December 31, 1983. He received their Order of the Beaver Lifetime Achievement Award plaque for his contributions to Canadian and BNA philately on September 27, 2003 at BNAPEX 2003 in London, Ontario. He was also a member of the Postal History Society of Canada.

Philatelic honours started flowing in early. In 1958, he was elected a Fellow of The Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL) and was named an Honorary Fellow of The RPSL in 2001, a rare honour for a foreigner and certainly the first such instance for a Canadian. The highest distinction a philatelist can attain is to be asked to sign The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists.



Harry was invited to append his signature to The Roll in 1991 and became, at the time, only the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian to be honoured. He followed his mentor, Vincent Graves Greene, who signed in 1963 and the greats of Canadian philately, Fred Jarrett (1935), Senator James A. Calder (1947) and Gerald E. Wellburn (1951). His dear friends Kenneth Rowe in 1995 and Michael Madesker in 2000 have since followed him. That same year he was co-opted to be a member of the Board of Elections for The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists.

These honours did not come without a great deal of hard work and dedication to the hobby. As a leader of organized philately in Canada, Harry built up the hobby from his first involvement in the 1950s and continued to the end of his life.

Internationally, Harry Sutherland has also been a major influence. From 1976 to 1981 he served as Director on the Board of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP) and represented Canada at many FIP congresses, exhibitions and meetings throughout the world. The FIP leaders frequently called on him to give legal advice on complex international philatelic issues. He was a qualified interna-



The inimitable sartorial splendour of Harry Sutherland. He is seen in 2002 receiving his FIP Medal of Service from then FIP President Knud Mohr.

*From the author's collection*

tional judge in traditional, postal history and literature after apprenticing in Amsterdam in 1977. As such, he judged both in Canada and around the world at local, regional, national, continental and world exhibitions. He was in fact to be the Vice-Chairman of the Jury at the first World Philatelic Exhibition of 2006: Washington 2006, held May 27 to June 3. For his work for FIP, Harry was given the FIP Medal of Service in 2002 in recognition of his exceptional service to philately on the international level.

For many years he was a stalwart of the Federación Interamericana de Filatelia (FIAF) having been elected Vice-President in 1974 and President in 1975. At the time of his death he was FIAF's long-standing Treasurer. In 1990, FIAF awarded him its Medal of Philatelic Merit. He was the first and only Canadian to be so honoured by FIAF.

He was deeply involved in all World Exhibitions hosted by Canada with the exception of one: CAPEX 1951. He was Vice-Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the three other CAPEXes: 1978, 1987 and 1996. He was co-Chairman of the Organizing Committee, with William Eyre of Canada Post, of CANADA '82, the 7<sup>th</sup> International Philatelic Youth Exhibition held in Toronto in 1982, and Vice-Chairman and Jury Coordinator for CANADA 92, the 11<sup>th</sup> World Philatelic Youth Exhibition, held in Montreal in 1992.

In addition to his outstanding contributions Harry will always be remembered in philatelic circles for three things: hosting excellent dinners, his smoking and his sartorial splendour. As an oenophile, who was a member of the Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin, he was very careful to match the courses with the wine and we were always treated to sumptuous repasts. His smoking bothered many but Harry is remembered fondly by some judges and not so fondly by apprentices for being able to scribble his evaluations of exhibits on the back of a pack of cigarettes. His results were invariably right when it came time to award medals. Harry's dress code at many stamp exhibitions was a beige safari suit with shoes and nylon socks. It's only recently that many of us found out that Harry



Figure 4: The Cinderella prepared for Harry's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 1980.  
*Courtesy of The RPSC*

was very conservative in his attire. If he found something he liked, such as the safari suits, he bought several of them, all in the same colour.

Probably his most favourite activity was to nurture the Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation from its beginnings in 1975 to its current enviable international position. Under his untiring 40-year leadership, the Foundation's library now has more than 250 linear feet of philatelic literature. In addition, the Foundation has extensive publishing and certification functions that are the envy of many.

In 1980, his friends, led by Ken Rowe and his mentor, Vinnie Greene, held a "Sutherland Roast" dinner on the occasion of Harry's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. As far as I can determine, there are no photographs of the occasion or minutes of what was said. The only surviving document is the guest list to which is attached the financial accounting of the evening. However, there exists a Cinderella stamp that was distributed to people who attended the black-tie affair. In Figure 4 you will see a photograph of a stamp prepared for the occasion showing Harry as a baby and what he looked like in the late 1970s. A second such item was produced by the Collectors Club New York in 2002 and is shown in Figure 5.

What few in our hobby know is that Harry had a life outside the law and philately. For example in the mid-1960s he became a Board member of the Ontario Association for Children with Learning Disabilities and served the Association for more than 20 years, ultimately becoming Chairman of the Board. He was an Elder, and served as Insurance Manager of the Calvin Presbyterian Church where a memorial

Figure 5: Another Cinderella prepared in 2002 by The Collectors Club of New York when Harry received the Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award.  
*Courtesy of The RPSC*



service was held for him on March 7, 2006 attended by some 500 people from the law, the church and the hobby.

President Theodore Roosevelt said that, "We have but one life here ... It pays, no matter what comes after it, to try and do things, to accomplish things in life, and not merely to have a soft and pleasant time." Harry Sutherland has lived this quote very well. As a lifelong builder of the hobby, his work has been singular and monumental and his influence will continue to be felt throughout Canadian and international philately.

Michael Madesker remarked, "Harry was possessed of a great wit; photographic memory; an ability to lead and inspire. His greatest tribute, however, was his love for his fellow man. A shy person, by nature, he did not wear his heart on his sleeve – there would be no garment large enough to accommodate it."

On March 6, 2006, as a tribute to Harry and in his memory, the Board of Directors of the VGG renamed its reference library the Harry Sutherland Philatelic Library. ☒