

Senior Connector

The Voice of Seniors throughout the Thompson/Nicola/Shuswap Districts — Winner of Kamloops "1994 Image Award"

Peter Wing, C.M., O.B.C.— Integral part of Kamloops history

BY BRENDA L. GROSS

BC Senior of the Year and former Kamloops Mayor Peter Wing has lived in Kamloops all of his 81 years, and according to Peter there's no other place he'd rather live.

He has received countless well deserved honours, yet is extremely modest, commenting, "It's nice to be recognized for doing things that you enjoy doing."

His list of accomplishments and awards gives just a brief glimpse into the life of Peter Wing. Beginning in his youth and continuing to present day, Peter has contributed his time, energy, resources and knowledge and helped shape Kamloops into the city that it is today.

In 1972 he was chosen Freeman of the City and was Governor of Canada JayCees; in 1976 he was awarded the Order of Canada. The following year, 1977, Peter was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal. That same year he received the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews Human Relations award. In 1990, Peter received the Order of British Columbia. In 1992 he was awarded the 125th Confederation Anniversary Medal, and most recently, in November of 1994, he was named BC Senior of the Year.

The oldest of seven children born to Chinese immigrants, Peter became the first

mayor of Chinese origin in North America.

His father Eng Wing came to Canada in 1901, at age 16, from the Canton region of China. When he arrived he could not speak a word of English, but quickly learned and became literate in both languages. His father started working in the restaurant business, and as Chinese custom dictates, returned to his homeland in 1910 to take a wife before returning once again to Canada.

Peter's mother came to Canada in 1913 and was the fifth Chinese lady in Kamloops. Peter was born the following year. In 1920 he started school at the Stuart Wood School. When he was in grade six, his teacher recommended him for the high school entrance exam. Peter passed the exams and thus entered high school a few years early.

Unfortunately, Peter fell ill following Grade nine and was out of school for an entire year. After recovering from his illness, he took a special Commercial Course and in 1930 he left school to work for his father who had just started a grocery business. His father's store called Cash 'n Carry was located on the corner of Third and Victoria Street where the Scotiabank stands today and was the first cash and carry store in the interior. Peter remained at his father's business until 1948, the year his father retired. He recalls

that the grocery orders were phoned in, then sent by CNR up the North Thompson river by way freight.

In November, 1932 Peter married Kim Kwong who was raised in Revelstoke. Peter credits his wife with being responsible for much of the success he has had throughout his life.

In 1943, Peter acquired an Orchard in Valleyview from George Oishi. It is at this time that he first became involved in politics. Peter was active in the BC Fruit Growers Association, BC Fruit Processors, and was on the board that formulated Sun Rype Products. Before becoming an orchardist Peter jokes that he couldn't tell the difference between an apple tree and a pine tree, but with his sharp mind, he was a quick study, and with the help of his good friends, learned everything he needed to know about running a successful



PETER AND KIM WING

orchard. Peter said the one thing he really enjoyed about running an orchard was that it gave him the opportunity to work with the machinery. He enjoyed tinkering around with the tractors and pumps. Because the Chinese are traditionally farmers, harvesting fruit came somewhat naturally to him.

Peter sold the orchard in 1957 and today the land is known as the Orchard Park Subdivision. He then started a new career as a Real Estate and Insurance Agent after purchasing the pioneer firm of Hall and Pruden, which then became Peter Wing Real Estate in 1959. He worked in real estate until his retirement in 1980.

In 1942, Peter joined the Rotary Club of Kamloops and served on many committees including president in 1976-77, and Governor of District 506 in 1981-82. He still regularly attends Rotary Club meetings.

He is a Honorary Life member of the Kamloops Chamber of Commerce, Past President and Life member of the Okanagan Mainline Municipal Association, Past President and Life Member of the Union of BC Municipalities, and has served as a Vice

President for the Canadian Federation of Municipalities.

From 1972 to 1987, Peter was a Director for the BCAA, of which he is now a honorary director and life member.

In 1960 Peter's friends urged him to run for Alderman for the city of Kamloops. He was elected and was Alderman until 1965. From 1966 to 1971, Peter was the 28th Mayor of the City of Kamloops. His time on council saw a rapid growth in the city, and he was involved in overseeing much of this growth. Peter recalls when he served as Mayor, it was the first time that the city budget went over one million dollars, a modest sum compared to today's city budget.

Peter has always been active in the Federal Liberal Party having been a long-time member, and most recently attended a local fund raising dinner at Columbo Hall for Liberal candidate Dr. Gur Singh. Peter commented that the community of Kamloops has had three Liberal Senators since the 1890's and he has known all three.

Peter has been a member of the
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Mother's Love

Her love is like an island

In life's ocean, vast and wide,

A peaceful, quiet shelter

From the wind, and rain, and tide.

'Tis bound on the north by Hope,

By Patience on the west,

By tender Counsel on the south,

And on the east by Rest.

Above it like a beacon light

Shine faith, and truth, and prayer,

And through the changing scenes of life,

I find a haven there.

— ANONYMOUS

Peter Wing

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United Church in Kamloops since his youth. He served on many church committees and sang in the church choir for many years. He also plays the organ and violin and at one time played with the Kamloops Symphony.

The Wing Building, at the corner of Third & Victoria in downtown, was built in 1947. Four years ago Peter sold the building to the Kipp-Mallery organization. They told Peter they are very proud to keep his family name on the building to honour the legacy of the Wing family.

One thing of which Peter is especially proud is the amalgamation of North Kamloops and South Kamloops, which was accomplished during his term as Mayor. He was also very honoured to host Queen Elizabeth II in 1971, and has attended two other garden parties for the Queen in Victoria. He has also enjoyed time he has spent with Prince Philip, and was honoured to meet Prince Charles and Lady Diana.

When one reviews the long and interesting history of Kamloops, one quickly discovers that Peter Wing is most certainly an outstanding part of that history.