

Our dad, Herschal Bookhalter was born in Winnipeg on June 15th 1923, the son of Hyman and Margaret Bookhalter. When he was six years old he moved with his parents and sister Libby to Invermay, a small town in North Eastern Saskatchewan. It was here that he spent his formative years and developed a love for music and sports. He learned to play the trumpet and excelled at hockey and in particular, baseball.

In 1941 he enrolled at the University of Alberta. His education was interrupted as he enlisted in the Canadian Army. He served three and a half years as a sergeant during World War 2.

In 1946 his baseball prowess was well known enough that he was offered a professional contract to play as a switch-hitting second baseman for a team in Saskatchewan. Unfortunately his father became ill that year and Dad had to decline the contract. When his father's health improved he resumed his educational studies at the University of British Columbia and University of Manitoba.

After university he started his business career working for Schwartz' Iron and Metal in Winnipeg. He also continued his love of music, playing the trumpet and leading a marching band.

In 1951 he married the love of his life, Elaine Tulman. Although mom always said he married her because she was shorter than him, their's was a match made in heaven. You couldn't imagine one without the other.

In 1952 Elaine and Herschal moved to Edmonton. Herschal continued his business career as manager of Hector's Ltd., a pipe and steel service centre--he started this firm with two employees and remained as a manager until 1982 (the company's name had changed to Russelsteel). On departing he left a staff of over 90 employees and Russelsteel Edmonton was recognized as the leader of the steel distribution industry in western Canada. Herschal continued working in the steel industry as the Alberta and Saskatchewan representative of A.J. Forsythe.

Dad was a member of the Masonic Order. He was a past Master of Dominion Lodge and officer of the Grand Lodge of Alberta. His proudest moment as a mason was when he received a lifetime appointment as the Grand Representative of the Grand Lodge of Israel for Alberta.

From the time he arrived in Edmonton Dad devoted himself to community service, both in the Jewish community and the community at large. He coached Little League Baseball for Crestwood community leading them to a city Championship. He served as a National Director for the Canadian Steel Service Centre Institute; he served eleven years on the Talmud Torah Board, Six years on the board of Jewish Family Services, served on the board of the Jewish Senior Drop In Centre, served on the board of the Jewish National Fund, was a national President of Men's Canadian Ort, he worked continuously on the United Israel and The United Jewish Appeal, he worked for United Way, the Diabetes Association, the Cardiac Institute and Edmonton community leagues,

he was president of the Beth Israel Synagogue and a lifetime member of the Board, he was instrumental in raising money and ensuring the construction of the new Synagogue. And of course he has been a long time member of the Chevra Kadisha.

In 2002 he was presented with Queen's Jubilee medal for community service by his dear friend Lois Hole – the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta.

If there is one thing I'll remember about Dad it was his wonderfully positive attitude about life. He never let his many health problems define him. Dad and Mom continued to travel out of the country as long as his health permitted. He attended and participated in both of his grandson's, Josh and Elli's, Bar Mitzvahs.

He continued to work for charitable organizations, went to synagogue every Saturday, and attended Oilers and Eskimo games. Even this spring he attended the Oilers last few games.

In his last few weeks when he was getting weaker, you'd ask him how he was and he'd say "hanging in there". Well Dad you did a lot more than hang in there and we're all richer for it!