Herbert Siegfried Grabowski



JULY 15, 2024

Herbert Siegfried Grabowski was born 24 March 1924 in Weissenburg, East Prussia, Germany. He was the middle son of three boys. His father Herman had given up his job with the railroad to live the independent life of a farmer, and so Herbert, as he would tell us, grew up barefoot and riding a horse to school.

Herbert excelled in school and received a scholarship to a university in Berlin, but missed out going there, as he was drafted into the German army, training as an officer. He spent little time in World War II, as first he was waylaid by an infection, and then later taken prisoner of war in France by the British Army. He spent several years in a prison camp in northern Scotland, where he taught himself English by learning five words a day. One camp mate had a postcard of Lake Louise and so Herbert vowed to see it one day.

Upon release from the camp, Herbert settled in Hamburg, as his brother had found a job there. Shortly after becoming a Christian, he noticed the oldest daughter of the pastor of Altona Baptist Church, Ricarda. After they became engaged, he went ahead of her to Canada, getting a job welding aluminum in Winnipeg. When Ricarda arrived in November 1953, they were married.

While in Winnipeg, Herbert heard about a new town being carved out of the wilderness in northern British Columbia, and so the two of them drove across the Prairies, naturally stopping for a few nights at Lake Louise.

At the new aluminum smelter in Kitimat, Herbert started at the bottom rung, but over the decades worked his way up to management. In 1956, he bought a house, and Ralph was born later that month. Sadly, two years later, his second son Norbert died a few weeks after birth.

Herbert was active in the community, such with the Kitimat Help Line and being on the board of deacons at Kitimat First Baptist Church. Herbert bought 24 acres of land near Terrace, which gave him great joy as he transformed it from a sea of stumps into a potato farm and a place to relax. As all of the relatives continued to live in Germany, the family flew there every few years.

Upon early retirement, Herbert and Ricarda spent summers up North in Kitimat and Remo, and winters down South at their condo in White Rock, where they attended White Rock Baptist Church. Sadly, Ricarda passed away far too young from cancer in 2008, and so Herbert spent 16 years as a widower, always wishing he could be reunited with his wife in heaven.

In his last two years, Herbert moved to Menno Place in Abbotsford, where he was quietly content. He eagerly looked forward to, and then celebrated, his 100th birthday party, but in the following months began to decline, until he died of natural causes during the evening of July 15, 2024.

Herbert is survived by his son Ralph (Heather); grandchildren Stefan (Ivonne), Heidi (Manuel), and Katrina (Adam); and his five great-grandchildren, Abigail, Erin, Vivian, Andrew, and Isaac. He was pre-deceased by his parents (Herman and Ida), his two brothers (Kurt and Helmut), his son Norbert, his wife Ricarda, and his great-granddaughter Rose.

Herbert is laid to rest on July 24, 2024, at Sunnyside Lawn Cemetery in South Surrey, next to his wife Ricarda. We praise God that he has found his ultimate rest through his faith in Jesus Christ.

Messages of Condolence

I have missed my dear old friend, neighbour. Now I mourn him. what a grand man.

— Peter Armes

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