James Blaine Eshom



APRIL 1, 2025

In Loving Memory ~ Our Dad's Legacy:

Our Dad loved his family history. We are very fortunate that Jim collected as much information as he possibly could. While Dad was researching the Eshom family tree, he discovered an Eshom who remained in Kentucky. It turns out that during the American Civil War of the 1860s, two Eshom brothers fought on opposite sides. The Eshom family therefore became estranged. To our Dad's delight, he was successful in filling in the blanks and relayed the historical story many times over!

James Blaine Eshom aka Jim was born on December 2, 1931 in Alberta, Canada. He was also born our family's fierce protector. Jim's twin brother was born with a hand deformity. Living together on a farm with their parents, grandparents and sister Mary, the twin boys were favourites. Tragedy struck unexpectedly when a kerosene lamp turned over. The farm house and nearly everything in it caught fire. Sadly, Jim's grandfather, his namesake, James Blaine succumbed to his burns. In 1932, the 1908 'four seater Brush model' car was used to transport his grandfather to a hospital many miles from the farm. In later years, Jim located the unique car which was now displayed in the Country Cousin Restaurant in Centralia, Washington. Many years later, Dad visited the Calgary Heritage Park Museum where he proudly showed the old car off to his grandson, James. The Eshom men were also proud to locate 'Eshom Road' in Centralia, Washington.

By the summer of 1935, even though the depression was still in progress, Jim's parents, Ray and Elinor (nee Roughedge) purchased an existing, run down grocery

store in Skiff, Alberta. The whole family relocated. Eventually; the store with a postal office, sold not only groceries, but hardware, vehicles, and gasoline. As the young twins grew, their chores grew, but so did their curiosity. One day, the boys rode their bikes to a nearby grain elevator. They had climbed to the top inside. Jim's twin brother was nearly drowning in the grain. Jim shimmied down a pole and reached Chuck in time. The inside of Jim's legs stung all the way home. Jim never told his parents why he had the burns on his legs. The twins along with their sister attended a one room school house. Apparently, one of their teachers would play a flute and close his eyes, long enough for nearly the whole class to walk out leaving the teacher standing alone. Everyone had a good laugh except the teacher. Remember the rod was not spared in those days. Another sibling, brother, Clifford, came along in 1941.

About 1938 or 1939, a young WWII pilot landed his plane on a field in Skiff. The Eshom family gave him a meal, refueled his plane and watched him in his plane disappear into the clouds. Jim was impressed and fascinated and in the late 1970s he took up flying lessons and eventually took his only solo flight in August of 1979.

In 1946, the store was sold and the family moved to Vancouver, BC. While Jim's father, Ray became a successful realtor and business owner, Jim attended John Oliver High school. Jim decided school wasn't for him and at the age of 15 1/2 years, he found work on a tugboat. He spent his 16th birthday aboard it, a very cold December day.

By now there were two more siblings. And over the course of a few years, his mother, Elinor met twin girls who were working in a grocery store. Jim was introduced and decided to invite one of them out. The Fitzpatrick girls, Beverley and Shirley were both at home when Jim telephoned. Shirley was doing her hair so Jim asked Beverley to go out. At the time Beverley was only 16 years old, Jim almost 19 years old. Now out of town on the tugboat frequently, their hearts grew

fonder. Jim bought his first car, an old 1940's car and when he arrived in town, he would pick up Beverley after school. Before long they became engaged and married on May 1st, 1954.

Jim gave up the tugboat and found work in the parts department at Dueck's on Broadway. It is there he met his long time friend, Don Bannerman, and who later became his brother 'n law. Soon Beverley's twin sister had a husband too!

Jim and Bev were living on the UBC grounds, in a building owned by Jim's father. Jim and Bev were the caretakers until they saved enough to purchase their first home on Somerville Street in Vancouver. By this time, the had three young daughters, Cathy, almost 3, Patty, 1 1/2 and Colleen a few months old. Can you imagine raising three female teenagers? Dad was mistaken several times as our older brother too!

Jim worked hard and was determined to move up at Dueck's, he won a competition one year, he was now the very proud owner of a brand new brown suit. For extra income, Jim purchased car wrecks that he could repair and resell. In a refurbished 1949 Hillman car; he gave our Mom her driving lessons. Not an easy task, a heavy duty clutch, a stick shift and little girls sitting in the back seat. Both of our parents painted their first house inside and out, planted a garden and repaired and maintained it regularly.

Jim continued to work in the car industry, he eventually secured a few different Body Shop Management positions, one was at Brasso Datsun, part of Jim Pattison's company. He spent many good years there. Each year he was given a brand new station wagon to drive. Our family enjoyed wonderful holidays with those cars, once the seats were folded down, a large piece of sponge was placed in the back where we could wave to all the passers by, play eye spy and sing to our hearts content along with our parents. We travelled to campsites in BC and Alberta. One year our Dad took us back to Skiff, by then a near ghost town. Another year Dad

drove us all to Disneyland, California.

Jim was still repairing cars and reselling them when the opportunity to purchase a larger and newer home became available, this one with a pool in the backyard. The house on East 53rd and Vivian Street in Vancouver was our family's favourite. Jim and Bev hosted numerous parties with friends and neighbours who remained life long friends. Entertainment was high on the list for the Eshom's. Jim had been entering fishing derbies so he purchased an aluminum boat. Good friends, the Alexander family came over to christen the boat with champagne as we slid it into the pool on a red carpet. It was a great party until their daughter Cathy was pinned underneath near the pool bottom. Jim sprung into action and saved the day! Jim and Bev's pool parties were out of this world, they threw many. One winter Dad secured boards around the pool so that his daughters could ice skate on it.

Jim's ambitious nature didn't stop with cars even while he was building a dunebuggy on a volkswagen frame. One day he drove into the driveway towing a real boat. Over the years the boats continued to grow in size. There are so many fantastic memories on the water. One of the most memorable moments occurred one summer when we set out for Salt Spring Island. The waves grew higher, the clouds grew darker, some of us became sea sick, fortunately our Mom and sister Patty were not on board, they had taken a ferry ahead of us. Dad was fearless, we will never forget our Mom calling out loudly as we entered the dock. She and our sister, had waited many hours without any word. It was definitely a close call! Dad later said, he didn't think we were going to make it! Perhaps it was that day that our Mom was promised a luxury cruise!

Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, Jim volunteered and coached his daughter's softball teams. As well as he took up curling, he was a leader in most sports. He taught his daughters many things, including how to jive, and drive a standard vehicle. He protected us by providing for us, and showed his love in many ways

including bringing home a sweet puppy as a surprise. Dad loved all kinds of animals and birds. He could mimic most bird calls, much to our Mom's displeasure. Mom was always happy to serve Dad one of her gourmet meals. Dad also enjoyed our Mom's piano playing and was also very proud of her artwork. Jim and Bev were thrilled to be able to take their daughters on what would be our last family holiday. Hawaii in the 1970's was amazing.

It was in 1973 when Jim and Bev purchased Rite Way Rentals on Lougheed Highway in Port Coquitlam. What? Another move, so far away? It was even a long distance to make a phone call then! With determination, Jim quit the car industry and took up renting industrial equipment to many companies and homeowners. They once again refurbished another house; this time located on the same lot as their business. The business grew, they worked sometimes 24 hours a day especially when storms came along. Over those years, Jim and Bev made several good rental owner friends who they travelled with many times. It was also during these years that their daughter Patty was sadly diagnosed with schizophrenia. Not commonly spoke of, the disease was something that the whole family had to come to terms with by educating ourselves, a very difficult and unrewarding sad challenge. Jim was fiercely protective of Patty and found several safe homes for her to live.

By the end of 1979, Jim had the moving bug again and purchased two ocean front lots in Belcarra. Jim and Bev orchestrated a plan to build their dream home and their good old friend Joe Durante would build it! They were thrilled to become grandparents too when the first of three came along. Jim and Bev continued travelling frequently, and they took many trips to the Gulf Islands in their 28 foot pleasure boat.

By the mid 1980's the market had collapsed, the Eshoms' struggled not only with their mounting debt, but our Mom woke up one morning to find that her face was

partially paralyzed by Bell's Palsy, she thankfully recovered. Jim and Bev made the decision to sell their dream home and build a rancher in South Surrey. Shortly after the move; our Mom fell into the homes' crawl space, it seriously damaged her foot and ankle and our Dad retired to protect our Mom forever in her new physical condition.

Jim was becoming an avid golfer enjoying a few holes in one, at one time was part of a PGA team. Dad also curled into his late 80's. Jim and Bev were able to travel again, to many parts of Europe, to the UK where Dad tried to find the original Eshom's. Jim golfed in Scotland at the famous St. Andrews Golf Course, in Hawaii, and many parts of Canada and America. The Eshoms' also travelled to the Caribbean with good friends. Then it was time to try out RV's, Jim drove all over America and Canada. They reached Newfoundland and also Alaska too. The Eshoms' also thoroughly enjoyed their many years travelling to Arizona where they purchased several homes to live in months at a time. Their last recreational home was in Sicamous where Jim purchased their last small house boat. He was also happy to voluntarily give golf lessons to young students. Jim and Bev were also happy to assist their daughters generously in many ways, especially our sister Patty who was not coping well with her illness. Tragedy struck once more when their daughter Patty died unexpectedly.

Jim and Bev showered their three grandchildren with so much love and took them to Arizona where they hiked, swam and shopped! The grandchildren also enjoyed wonderful summers in their pool and on the ocean in their boat. Jim also gave each of the grandchildren a few golf lessons as well as took his granddaughter skiing, where we later learned that was one of the reasons for one of his new knees! He never failed to remind us too, that he'd suffered numerous broken bones as a young and older adult, but persevered and we listened to those stories many times!

In Jim's final years, he surprised all of us by driving to Calgary alone in his RV. He wanted to visit his grandson James and his prairie home province of Alberta one last time. The protector of our family was thrown a hard ball when our Mom was diagnosed with dementia. He continued to keep her safe and cared for her even through his eventual diagnosis with congestive heart failure. After his final days in the hospital, Jim was determined to be with our Mom in her residence at the end of his life. We are thankful they saw each other one last time.

Through triumph and tragedy, our Dad remained strong and resilient to the end. He leaves behind his loving and devoted wife, Beverley, his daughters, Cathy (Al), Colleen (Mike), one granddaughter, Jennifer (Trevor), two grandsons, James (Jana) and Blaine (Katrina), four great-grandchildren whom he adored, Caelynn, Weston, Leni and Joni. Also, six step-grandchildren and their families, who he lovingly and generously welcomed into the family. His brother, Cliff and sister Judy (Rob). He also leaves behind many nieces, nephews and wonderful old and new friends. He is predeceased by his daughter, Patty and son in law, Wayne, his brothers, Chuck (twin), Ken, and sister Mary. Also predeceased are his parents, Ray and Elinor.

Last year, Jim made the decision to become baptized in the Jehovah's Witness faith. He made some very thoughtful friends who kindly visited him frequently in his last months. We wish to acknowledge and thank Keith, Peter, Doug and Audrey. The family also wishes to thank the caring staff of the Residence of Morgan Heights and the Peace Arch Hospital.

Jim passed away peacefully on April 1, 2025 with family around him. We will miss our 93 year young Dad and his bird whistling! A remarkable life, well lived. We will love you forever Dad. A memorial service is to be held at the Kingdom Hall. A private family memorial gathering will be held to honour our Dad at a later date.

Messages of Condolence

Beautiful tribute to your Dad. Colleen and Cathy

— Linda White

Thank you for this insight into your family's life. I have fond memories of your mom and dad’s hospitality and love. He is sadly missed.

— Judy Foxley (nee) Eshom

Dear Cathy, Colleen and families, what a wonderful tribute full of fond memories. Our sincere condolences on the passing of your dear dad, may these treasured memories always bring much joy to your hearts!

— Elsie & Walter

Dear Cathy, Colleen and Eshom family,Please accept our deepest sympathies for the loss of such a wonderful man! Jim had such an amazing and positive impact on so many people. He had a unique ability to influence, motivate and coach people in a kind and beneficial way. Our personal experiences with Jim have had far reaching effects on our family's lives to this day. Jim was my first employer, when he purchased Rite Way Rentals. I (Yves) started working there full-time in 1973 as a newly graduated eighteen year old. In the years that followed, all three of my brothers, Rene, Luc and Hoist (aka Rolf) worked for Jim. It was the first real job after completing high school for all four of us. He taught us many mechanical skills that all four of us boys have found profoundly useful in our later employments and other endeavors. In addition, and likely far more important, he showed by his stellar example and personal guidance how to interact with people in a service oriented business and environment. They were such valuable lessons.Also so vitally influential; Jim's wife Bev, daughters Cathy, Patty and Colleen were all very sweet to us boys and treated us like family during those years we worked for Jim. We thank you dearly for that!Jim Eshom and his great character will undoubtedly be remembered for a very long time.Sincerely, Yves Hartmann

— Yves Hartmann
