

# Jakob "Jake" Krahn

OCTOBER 13, 2019

On Sunday, October 13, at 5:07 am at the age of 95 Jakob (Jake) Krahn passed away peacefully at the Cascade Hospice with close family by his side.

Jake was born in 1924 in Friedensfeld, Ukraine to Bernhard and Margaretha Krahn. Dad was the fifth born of six children. Growing up in Friedensfeld at this time was not easy and day to day life was often difficult. Quite frequently the family did not know where their next meal was going to come from and these thoughts would often linger on throughout the days. Being in such a hungry state of mind lead to difficult decisions that had to be made. I remember Dad saying that even though he knew it wasn't right, he had to steal food for the family just to survive.

At the age of 13, his oldest brother Gerhardt who had just been married for six months, and his Dad were taken by the secret police on November 17, 1937 never to be seen again. During the beginning of the war Dad was recruited by the army as an interpreter. Near the end of the war as the Germans were retreating he was able to go alongside them to escape out of Russia. After escaping out of Russia during WW2, Dad spent some time in a Munich refugee camp and was baptized there. It was there where he met and became engaged to Helen Grunau.



This was a pivotal time for Dad as he partook in the difficult journey across the ocean landing in the promised land of Canada. After landing in the land of milk and honey another disaster came their way when the Fraser River overflowed its banks and flooded many parts of the Valley. Despite the flood water reaching the first floor of the church, they still got married on October 3, 1948 at Greendale GC church.

Mom and Dad's first home was on Evans Road where they used sawdust in the walls for insulation and lawn chairs as furniture. Dad's first job was in the nearby hop fields where he was making a whopping 50 cents an hour. It was here that Jake and Helen had their first-born Ernie in 1950. Eventually Dad was able to find a job in construction. Before being uprooted from the Ukraine he had found an interest in building and he had just recently taken courses in Architecture so this was a good fit for him.

As an immigrant in Chilliwack and not knowing the language, Dad was not treated very well in the workplace. He told of a story where on a construction site his coworkers would make him pile lumber from one side of the site to the other amidst laughing at him while he was doing it. Despite all of this, he was proud to be in a free country and a Canadian and so it didn't matter how he was treated.

While working on a construction job in Chilliwack building the new Eaton's store Dad had an accident which resulted in him losing an eye. While he was in the hospital a child in the bed next to him was singing. Not being happy with his current situation he asked the boy to settle down and keep quiet. At the same time he was also wondering why the child was so happy in the bed next to him. The child replied and told him that he was completely blind. This was a wakeup call for Dad realizing that with one good eye he still had it pretty good. After Dad's full recovery he had difficulty getting hired on by another construction company and that's when he decided to go out on his own.

In 1953, Dad and Mom moved to Storey Ave. where they purchased a one-acre parcel of land. It was on Storey Ave. that Jim (1954), David (1957), Walter (1959), and Dennis (1966) were born. Dad would have never imagined all this could take place after all the hardships they endured back in the Ukraine.

Dad's business flourished and the family was growing. So, it was in 1961, he took out a full-page ad in the Chilliwack Progress to thank the city and all the people who had hired him. This was also a way for him to advertise that he would be happy to take on more jobs. On a side note, this full-page ad was only found when Walter, who is also in construction, was doing a renovation job on Fairfield Island in 2015. The house that was being renovated was originally built and owned by Henry Rempel. His son Ray bought and moved into the house and asked Walter to help with the renovation. While walls were being ripped apart Rob Krahn, Jake's grandson, noticed an old newspaper clipping behind the wall that had some pictures of construction on them. As Rob looked closer, he realized it was a full-page ad taken out by his Opa. Walter was working in another part of the house jackhammering. Rob came over to where Walter was working, tapped him on the shoulder, and showed him the full-page ad which was still in mint condition. Walter had the paper framed and put behind glass and the picture still hangs on Dad's wall at Wells Road.

In 1966 Mom and Dad moved to a two acre parcel out in the country on Adams Road in Greendale. Dad was never afraid to do things for his family. In his spare time after work he built a tree fort way up in the big birch tree. He "put himself out on a limb" and sat on branch with a rope tied high up in the tree to nail on the plywood walls. Dad had just put the floor on with the skimpy stairs going 20 feet up in the air and no railings when the family decided to take a break from building. Mom said, "Where is Dennis?" Being that he was only two years old everyone was frantically looking around trying to find him. In the distance a family member heard a hammer banging. Dennis had climbed up the stairs

to the treehouse floor. Luckily, he was okay. This only added to the excitement of building the tree fort. There was never a dull moment with Dad. Dad also got the boys into snow and water skiing, playing instruments like the accordion, trumpet, violin, and clarinet. Dad wanting to show off their skills he had them often playing for visitors or at family functions.

Dad never took a lesson in his life and had trouble hitting the correct notes, but this did not stop him from singing while playing the mandolin and accordion. Later on in his life he bought an inexpensive organ which the grandkids loved to play. Dad had speakers installed in the main rooms of the house so that he could play his favorite music for everyone to hear. He would often rush guests into his office to show them his newest tapes or CDs. Even into the last years of his life you could hear him bellowing his favorite tunes while he was in the bathroom.

Dad always enjoyed being around people and playing games. Mom and continuously hosted and entertained family, friends, and relatives locally and from around the world. He greeted all his visitors with a strong hand shake stating boldly "My Fellow Canadian..." and he was proud to be one. He probably played every board game invented. In the last number of years he narrowed his playing of games to a card game called golf and in the end he only played dice. As soon as someone would come over he would tell them to have a seat or say, "Who wants to lose?" Dice was a game that needed to happen before any conversation could take place. Dad was also earnestly involved in his church "Eden Mennonite" volunteering his time as an usher, the church building committee, and ultimately constructing the church.

Dad's second last move happened in 1984. In the early eighties he bought a one-acre piece of land backing onto the creek at Wells Road. He first drew the plan in his head for the property during the many walks he took. He then put his thoughts on a napkin which he gave to someone to put the final touches on the drawing.

Mom and Dad moved to their final residence in the fall of 1984. Although he was retired, he still continued to work on many projects. The best way to realize his ideas were to jot them down on a napkin and have someone draw them professionally. He started as a housebuilder but later on he went on to build commercially where he built many of the dealerships in Chilliwack, Auld Phillips, Johnston Packers, Fortins and many other buildings.

On December 19, 2006 Mom passed away after battling cancer. From then on he was on his own. It wasn't an easy time for Dad after Mom passed away but he kept going. From the time Mom was gone he ended up making many trips to Tim Hortons and would always catch the Wednesday special at "King Burger" as he called it. On April 26, 2010 his second oldest Jim passed away after a long bout with cancer.

Dad's wish was to live at home until the end and he almost made it. He spent his last 8 days at the Cascade Hospice. Dad lived a long and full life and he is survived by his other four sons Ernie (Betti), David (Lana), Walter (Raelene), and Dennis (Lydia) as well as his many grandchildren, greatgrandchildren, and other relatives and close friends. A special thanks to Carol, Marlene, Sue and Diane for the care they gave Jakob over the past several years and to Dr. MacKenzie. Also, a very special thanks to a long time friend Jake Suderman for all the time and care you provided to Dad.

Thank you Dad for all the life lessons you provided. You will be missed. We all will miss you, your joy, and your singing for life. Even now we hear your blessed farewell as you've repeated so many times... "Be safe, goodbye, don't do anything I wouldn't do, that should give you a little room anyways..."

You are invited to leave a personal message of condolence for the family.

## Messages of Condolence

Ernie,

Our deepest sympathies to you and your family on your loss of your father.

— **Colin A. White**

Walt, sorry to hear about your dad's passing. He's in a much better place. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family as you transition into orphanhood. I know that you're both sad and relieved at the same time. I pray that you will feel Gods blessings this coming Christmas season.

— **Leslie All**

So sorry Krahn family to hear of your Father's passing.

Comforting wishes to you all

— **Barbara Britton**

Ernie, so sorry to hear of your dad passing. Take comfort in the fact that he is in a better place now. It was good to see you at the fifty year high school reunion.

— **Peter Ens**

Hallo Ernie, wir sind mit dir Verwandte. Vor einigen Jahren haben wir Krahn Genealogie von Ben und Käthe Krahn (Margaret Petker) in englisch bekommen und in deutsch übersetzt.

Ich möchte jetzt unser Zweig der Familie Krahn (der von Kornelius Krahn (Geburtsdatum 1887 Friedensfeld Ukraine) und Katharina Krahn (geb. Peters Chutor Ljubimowka Ukraine) Geburtsdatum 1890) weitermachen und bin auf deine Anzeige im Internet gekommen.

in diesem Buch auf Seite 12 ist Foto von deine Oma und Opa. Wenn du möchtest, können wir in der Verbindung bleiben.

Mit Liebe und Gottes Beistand Anna und Jakob Wölke (29.02.2020)

— **Anna Wölke (geb. Krahn)**

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<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/krahn-jakob-jake>

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